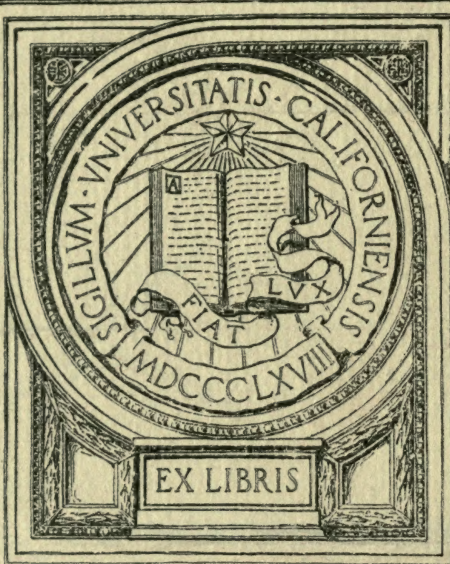
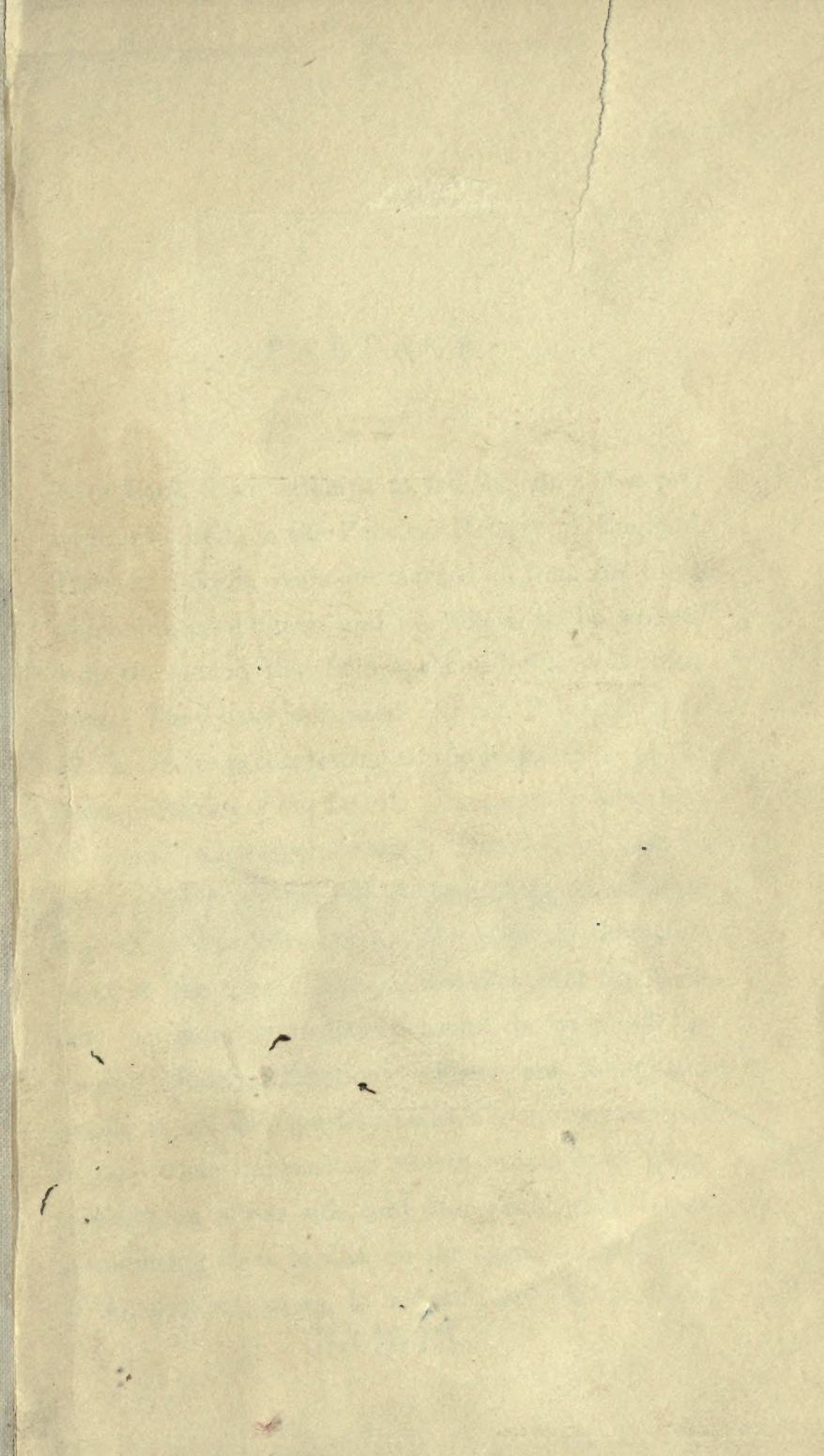



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PREFACE.

THIS Book is an attempt to tell the story of a very striking episode in the Political History of England. These half-dozen years are marked off from the times which preceded them, and are likely to be severed from the period that follows them, by deep dividing lines. They have witnessed a great Political crisis, which will be as interesting to the historian as to the party politician of the future. I venture to hope that the careful contemporary study I have been able to give to these events will do something to facilitate the fuller understanding of the political characteristics of the time. I hope, however, that the book may be more immediately useful in view of the coming General Election. There are thoughtful people in all the constituencies who are not content to take their impressions of late events from party speakers on either side, and who would wish, before pronouncing their verdict on the men and measures of the past six years, to refresh their own recollec-

tions by reference to authentic documents. I hope I have enabled such readers to test the statements of Ministerial and Opposition candidates by the very words of official Despatches, of Parliamentary documents, and of acknowledged speeches and writings. I have in all cases supplied the means of verifying my statements, and though I have exercised my own judgment freely, and expressed my opinions strongly, I have at least given the reader every opportunity of testing the fulness and accuracy of the premises from which my conclusions are drawn.

P. W. CLAYDEN.

LONDON,

January 27, 1880.

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ENGLAND

UNDER

LORD BEACONSFIELD.



CHAPTER I.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT.

THE year 1874 opened without any sign of the great political change which was impending over the United Kingdom. The country was in a most flourishing condition; a great flood of wealth had poured over it, stimulating a lavish expenditure on the part of all classes but those who live on fixed incomes, and causing the national revenue to increase, as the Prime Minister said, "by leaps and bounds." Employment was plentiful, and, as a consequence, wages were higher than they had ever been before; even the agricultural labourers had plucked up courage, under the able leadership of Mr. Joseph Arch, to demand some increase of the wretched pay with which they had been contented for several generations. Trade of all kinds had been prosperous beyond all former ex-

perience. The exports of the United Kingdom, which had amounted in 1868 to £179,677,812, had risen in 1873 to £255,164,000; the highest aggregate ever yet reached in the commercial history of England. Immense reductions of taxation had been made; but the revenue had nevertheless increased from £69,600,219 in 1868 to £76,608,770 in 1873. Expenditure meanwhile had been reduced. The outlay, which in 1868 had amounted to £71,236,242, had fallen in 1873 to £70,714,448. For two or three years of this economical administration of our national resources there had been a crowding of interested classes to the doors of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to put in their claims to some share in the relief from taxation which each budget in that happy period announced. The income-tax, which had been raised to sixpence in the pound by Mr. Ward Hunt, Mr. Disraeli's Chancellor of the Exchequer, in April, 1868, had been reduced to fivepence by Mr. Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of Mr. Gladstone's Government, in April, 1869, and to fourpence in the next budget, in April, 1870. It had been again raised to sixpence to pay the cost of abolishing Purchase in the Army in 1871; but had been dropped to fourpence in 1872, and to threepence in 1873. Apart from the income-tax, there had been further remissions of taxation, amounting on the average of five years to more than two millions and a half in each year. The National Debt had been reduced in the same period by more than £30,000,000, against an addition of £12,000,000 for fortifications and the purchase of tele-

graphs. At the end of the financial year 1873-4 there was, as the result of the combined economy and prosperity which five years of Liberal Government had brought, a surplus of revenue over expenditure of nearly six millions, which was to be applied in the complete reform of our financial system in the budget of 1874.

There had been a good deal of discussion all through the summer and autumn of 1873 as to the position of the Government. The bye-elections had turned against them during the discussions on the Education Act, and each succeeding year had given a heavier balance in favour of their opponents. They won four seats and lost five in 1870; the gain was reduced to one seat and the losses rose to six in 1871; in 1872 there were seven defeats and not a single victory; and in the fifty-three weeks which ended with the Stroud election in January, 1874, ten Liberal seats had been lost; and though Bath and Taunton had been kept after most exciting contests, in the former of which Mr. Disraeli wrote his celebrated letter, accusing the Ministry of blundering and plundering, not one had been gained. In the whole Parliament forty-two seats had changed sides: ten which were Conservative at the General Election, having become Liberal, and thirty-two Liberal seats having been surrendered to the Opposition. The gain on one side and the loss to the other represented forty-four votes on a division. The Liberal majority of 112, with which the new Parliament had opened in December, 1868, was therefore reduced to sixty-

eight during the recess which followed the Session of 1873; and Mr. Gladstone had the prospect of this diminished, but still powerful, majority in the Session to which the country was looking forward in 1874.

There were other sources of anxiety to the Ministry than the weakening of their Parliamentary majority. In any party division they were still safe as to numbers, but their legislative authority had departed from them. Every fresh defeat in the country increased the chances of humiliation in Parliament. The Conservative majority in the House of Lords, which had been cowed by the striking expression of public opinion in the first two years of the new Parliament, and had passed the Irish Land Bill, the Irish Church Bill, and the Education Act, had gradually recovered confidence; had thrown out the Bill for abolishing Purchase in the Army, and had first scornfully rejected and then mutilated the Ballot Bill. In the Session of 1873 the Lords had greatly modified the Judicature Bill, had thrown out the Rating Bill, on which the House of Commons had spent much of its time, the Registration Bill, and several other Liberal measures. The centre of gravity in legislative matters was shifting. The Conservative victories in the constituencies had practically transferred the supreme authority in Parliament from the reduced Liberal majority in the House of Commons to the constant Conservative majority in the House of Lords. The "suspensive veto" claimed for the Upper House became absolute for the existing Parliament, and the Ministry probably felt that, though they would be

sustained in office by their House of Commons majority, they were only nominally in power. The Opposition, on the other hand, gained confidence and audacity with every victory scored in the constituencies, but showed no signs of any expectation of accession to office.

Mr. Disraeli went down to Glasgow in November, 1873, to deliver his address as Rector of the University; and the occasion was seized for a great manifestation of Scottish Conservatism. There had been a huge marshalling of the Lancashire Orangemen at Manchester at Easter, 1872; in June of the same year there had been a London demonstration at the Crystal Palace; and on each of these occasions the Conservative Leader had discouraged his friends and surprised his opponents by confining himself entirely to criticisms of Liberal measures, and accusations and complaints against the Ministry, and giving no hint of a Conservative policy. The Glasgow visit was expected to show him in a more positive attitude. For weeks before it, the Conservative journals had thrown out hints of the coming programme, and led Conservative working men to expect that, at last, a Conservative policy was to be stated which would show them that the Tory Codlin was their friend, and not the Liberal Short. The Conservative Leader, however, had no policy to state. His speech did not wear out the patience of his audience as the three hours' oration at the Free Trade Hall had wearied the Lancashire men in 1872; but it was felt to have no meaning as a bid for power. He admitted that the country was

prosperous, and credited the Ministry with it; and then proceeded, in a speech which Sir Henry James afterwards described as a model of satire, to "chaff" the Administration on their unpopularity. He accused them of having harassed trades and worried professions; but Mr. Lowe's too-hastily abandoned match-tax, and his dropped suggestion of a tax on farmers' carts and horses, were the sole examples he gave of the harassing, and the worrying was mainly represented by the income-tax collectors, by the new Civil Service regulations, and by the arrangements in the army consequent on the abolition of Purchase. He charged them with trying to lower the authority of the House of Lords, and with lessening the influence of this country in the counsels of Europe. As to Parliamentary Reform, he tried to alarm the boroughs by saying that the whole borough representation would have to be revolutionized if any further Reform were attempted; and that in any redistribution of seats, every town of less than 40,000 inhabitants would lose its separate Parliamentary existence. He concluded with a bid for Scotch votes. "It may be open for England," he said, "again to take her stand upon the Reformation, which three hundred years ago was the source of her greatness and her glory; and it may be her proud destiny to guard civilization alike from the withering blast of atheism, and from the simoom of sacerdotal usurpation." Nothing has occurred during nearly six years of the speaker's Administration to give the slightest meaning or significance to these words; though Mr. Disraeli

added that the Conservative party in this great work might have to call Scotland to aid it, instead of any longer "mumbling the dry bones of political economy, and munching the remainder biscuit of an effete Liberalism." There was much more significance in his concluding words, as interpreted by the experience of several disastrous years, in which, after saying that a General Election was at hand, he added, "it is very probable that the future of Europe depends very greatly on the character of the next Parliament of England."

These Glasgow speeches had, for the moment, the very contrary effect to that which Mr. Disraeli intended and his followers hoped. The indefiniteness of the Opposition Leader's views disappointed his audiences, and for a time disheartened his friends. It was evident that he was still only in the mood for criticizing a Ministry which he felt he could weaken and damage, but scarcely hoped to supplant. Reflecting people asked what there was to put in the place of the Liberal policy if the Liberal Ministers were dismissed. Meanwhile, Mr. Bright's return to the Ministry was believed to have strengthened it with the country; and Mr. Lowe's removal from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and Mr. Gladstone's assumption of that office, had given general satisfaction. The Exeter election, where Sir John Coleridge had been succeeded by Mr. Arthur Mills, was a fact on the other side; but the Liberals believed that in Sir E. Watkin they had a bad candidate. It was believed on all hands that the Ministerial prospect

was brightening. Mr. Cardwell, speaking to the Oxford Druids on New Year's Day, said, that "the autumnal fog" had lifted a little, and would entirely disappear when Parliament met. The oldest organ of official Liberalism, the *Edinburgh Review*, in the number issued in the middle of January, expressed the universal feeling among the Liberal party, by saying of the Opposition, "When they have a programme; when they have a Leader with whom they can act in perfect sympathy, and when the front bench of the Liberal party have done something really to forfeit the confidence of the country, the present Opposition may hope for a term of office, but so long as they confine themselves to carping at Liberal measures which they dare not propose to repeal, and exulting over Liberal disagreements which, if they exist, are only partial and temporary matters of procedure rather than of principle, so long they may calculate on acting simply as the brake, and not as the driving-wheel, in the great machine of politics." Mr. Leatham, speaking at Huddersfield in the first week in January, ridiculed the idea of a Conservative reaction. "The nation," he said, "is keeping a kind of political sabbath. It looks back on six Liberal years and it rests on the seventh, and with one unfortunate exception sees that its work is good." Mr. Leatham concluded his speech by saying, amid loud cheers from a too confident audience, "On every side of late has been heard the cry, 'The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!' Well, then, let Samson go forth and shake himself, as at other times."

While Mr. Leatham was thus speaking at Huddersfield, the votes of a changeable constituency were being counted up at Stroud. This Gloucestershire borough is one of the hybrid creations of the first Reform Act. It is neither town nor country, neither borough nor county, neither manufacturing nor agricultural, but a muddled mixture of all. It is one of those boroughs in which the lack of a population large enough to be represented by two members was made up by the inclusion of some thousands of acres of agricultural land. The traveller by the Great Western Railway, on emerging from Sapperton Tunnel, finds himself in a most romantic country, with cloth mills dotted along the valleys between the lofty hills. He passes Brimscombe Station; three miles farther on he is at Stroud; two and a half miles farther bring him to Stonehouse; and from thence he goes on to the Midland Railway. The whole of this pleasant journey has been within the Parliamentary borough of Stroud. It was these acres of hill and dale, of field and wood, with the mixed population which tills them, and the people who tend the mills in the river valleys, that decided the fate of the busiest Parliament of the present reign. There is nothing in the character of the borough to give it any claim to pronounce so decisive a verdict. It has no municipal corporation and no public life. The actual town of Stroud had but 7,082 inhabitants in 1871; the parish had 9,957; and the Parliamentary borough, including 75 people added to it by the Boundary Commission, had 38,610, which was fewer by 1,305 than it had

when the great Reform Act was passed. Its acreage is as large as its population ; and it covers eighty square miles of land.

In 1873 Stroud was represented by two Liberals, and Mr. Winterbotham had been returned by 2,805 votes against Mr. Dorrington's 2,096. Mr. Winterbotham was an Evangelical Nonconformist ; and he had spoken strongly on behalf of that important section of the Liberal party in the Education debates. Mr. Gladstone was struck by his Parliamentary success, and gave him office—making, in so doing, one of the most popular and judicious appointments he ever made. Mr. Winterbotham died at Rome in December ; and the regret which was very widely felt for him, caused much attention to be directed to the choice of his successor. The rising hopes of the Liberals, and the desperate zeal of their opponents, both fixed on this election as an occasion for a new trial of strength. It came to be regarded as a test of the feeling of the country ; and both sides looked on as the Romans and the Albans watched the contest of their champions. Mr. Dorrington was again brought forward by the Conservatives, and Sir Henry Havelock was adopted as the Liberal candidate. Both sides were confident of success, but when the ballots were counted it was found that Mr. Dorrington had won the seat by 391 votes. So decisive a victory raised the spirits of the Conservatives all over the country to exultation ; and cast a new gloom over the Ministers and their friends. Nor did the hard-won victory which followed

nine days later, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, give them much encouragement. The death of Sir Joseph Cowen had made a Liberal vacancy in that great commercial borough; and his son, Mr. Joseph Cowen, offered himself to fill his father's place. He was opposed by Mr. Hamond, who had been defeated in 1868 by the late member, by more than 4,000 votes. Mr. Joseph Cowen's poll was much larger than his father's; but there had been such an increase in the Conservative minority, that he was returned by a majority of but little more than a thousand.

The defeat at Stroud, and the diminished majority at Newcastle-on-Tyne, were probably the immediate causes of the dissolution of Parliament which quickly followed them. Mr. Gladstone saw in them the final dissipation of the moral force of his majority in the House of Commons; and resolved to take Mr. Leatham's advice, but perhaps in a sense different from that in which Mr. Leatham gave it, that Samson should go out and shake himself. No hint of what was passing in the Prime Minister's mind got abroad, and the papers and public men continued to discuss with eagerness the prospects of the Session which was fast approaching. Parliament was to meet on the 5th of February; and there was a general expectation that some great financial measures were to be presented to it. Mr. Gladstone had taken the Chancellorship of the Exchequer on Mr. Lowe's transference to the Home Office; and it was believed that a great budget would be the main feature of the Session. There was some curiosity, however, to hear

what Mr. Gladstone would say about his own seat. It was hotly contended, on the Conservative side, that by accepting another office he had vacated his seat; and threats had been made that his right to vote in the House of Commons would be contested. The law officers of the Crown held that the seat had not been vacated; but there was just enough doubt on the point to make timid friends of the Prime Minister anxious, and to induce some of his enemies to say that he would never meet Parliament to have the matter tested and decided. Whether this difficulty, if it was one, had any influence on Mr. Gladstone's decision is still known only to himself. It is scarcely consistent with his character that it should have influenced him at all; and it is quite certain that any power such a motive might exert would lie hid, probably even from himself, under much larger and weightier considerations.

A Cabinet Council was held on the 19th of January, at which all the Ministers were present but the Prime Minister. Two days later it was announced that Mr. Gladstone was ill in bed with a severe cold and hoarseness. Even then no suspicion of the coming dissolution disturbed the holiday rest of any member of the doomed Parliament outside the Cabinet. If such fears had existed, the delay of four days after the Cabinet meeting in announcing the dissolution would have set them at rest. Politicians of all kinds—even the subordinate members of the Ministry itself—were still looking forward to the meeting of Parliament, which was due in less than a

fortnight, when the blow of the dissolution fell. Late in the evening of the 23rd of January Mr. Gladstone's address, announcing the dissolution, was sent to the newspapers, and became known to political circles in London; and on the morning of the 24th the daily papers announced that the Parliament of 1868 had ceased to be.

CHAPTER II.

THE APPEAL TO THE COUNTRY.

MR. GLADSTONE'S address was of portentous length. In the *Daily News* it occupied three columns of the type in which the leading articles are printed. It was described by Mr. Disraeli, in his own address to the electors of Buckinghamshire, which immediately followed it, as "a prolix narrative." Its prolixity, however, makes it the more useful as an historical document, since it sets forth in full detail the reasons for the most needless, most untimely, and most unfortunate dissolution in English history. Foremost among these reasons was the defeat of the Ministry on the Irish Education Bill in the previous March. After four of the busiest Sessions on record, each one of which will leave a permanent mark on the character, the fortunes, or the history of England, Mr. Gladstone had resolved to signalize the fifth Session of his Parliament by dealing with the third branch of the Irish difficulty. He had pledged himself to do this in 1868; and it was a sign of the difficulty he felt in redeeming the pledge that he left it to the last. His Bill was unfortunate. It gave the Roman Catholic clergy more control of the Irish Universities than English Liberals could concede, but less than

the Irish prelates themselves demanded. The Bill was consequently defeated, not only, as Mr. Gladstone said, "if not by a combined, yet by a concurrent, effort of the Leader of the Opposition and of the Roman Catholic prelacy of Ireland;" but also by the strong opposition it met from some important and energetic sections of the Liberal party. It was Liberal antagonism, and not the combination of Tory votes with those of the Roman Catholic nominees, which really destroyed the Bill. The Ministers had resigned immediately after this defeat, but Mr. Disraeli refused to take office; and they returned to their posts "with avowed reluctance," Mr. Gladstone said, and, he also thought, with greatly diminished strength. This diminution of strength was not shown in divisions in the House of Commons, but Mr. Gladstone perceived it in "the summary and rapid dismissal in the House of Lords of measures which had cost much time and labour to the House of Commons." This state of things had "not improved during the recess, especially the latter part of the recess," hence the Ministry had resolved on an appeal to the country. "From a state of things thus fitful and casual," continued the Address; "we desire to pass to one in which the nation will have had full opportunity of expressing will and choice as between the political parties. The Government of the day, whatever it be, will be armed with its just means of authority both within and without the Legislature. The Opposition will enjoy the power, and doubtless will not shrink from the duty of taking office."

There is a curious mixing up in these sentences of the future Government of the day and the then existing Opposition, which suggests that for the moment Mr. Gladstone yielded to the belief, which reappeared in some sentences at the close of the Address, that the appeal he was making would result disastrously to himself. No such feeling affected the rest of the Address. The review of five years of Liberal legislation was such an account of his stewardship as no former Minister had ever been able to present to his countrymen. Then followed what Mr. Chamberlain has since described as "an appeal to the selfishness of the middle classes. Nearly two columns of the *Times*," continues Mr. Chamberlain, "were filled with a sketch budget, and the promise of the repeal of the Income Tax, while ten lines were thought sufficient for the statement that changes might possibly be found desirable in the Franchise, the Land Laws, the Game Laws, the Education Act, the Licensing Laws, and the Act affecting Trades' Unions, and that if the country should show itself in favour of alteration, Mr. Gladstone and his Ministry would not be unwilling to fulfil its behests." * This is a shrewd and, on the whole, a correct summary of the Address; but it is not entirely fair to Mr. Gladstone. It is a construction which the Address can easily be made to bear, and which was, in fact, very generally put upon it by Mr. Gladstone's opponents. In this view of it the Opposition was justified in speaking of its finan-

* *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1874.

cial proposals as "a huge bribe;" and Mr. Chamberlain was not far from the mark in describing it, in the article just quoted, as "the meanest public document which has ever, in like circumstances, proceeded from a statesman of the first rank." A closer study of the circumstances in which the Address was written and sent out, makes it needful to revise this hasty interpretation, and to reverse this severe and hostile verdict. There are signs that the dissolution was suddenly resolved upon, and the Address hastily composed; but it is quite certain that the financial scheme had been diligently prepared for and carefully elaborated. It was the natural completion of the work in which the Ministry had been engaged for five years. It was the crown and finish of an unequalled series of legislative reforms. It was the final adjustment of a national burden which the Ministry had already considerably lightened. Mr. Gladstone had evidently formed the outlines of the scheme before any thought of a dissolution of Parliament had occurred to him. The country had been prepared to expect it from the previous August, when Mr. Gladstone took the Chancellorship of the Exchequer from Mr. Lowe. Everybody anticipated that a great reforming budget would be the main feature of the approaching Session. It therefore occupied so large a place in the election Address, for the simple reason that it had received so large a share of Mr. Gladstone's attention. It seemed to him to be the one thing now remaining to be done; and it necessarily pushed into the background the

important, but much remoter topics which, after half a dozen years, are still questions for the future. Had Mr. Gladstone meant to bribe the constituencies, he went the wrong way to work. From this point of view the election Address was a mistake. It was not definite enough to act as a bribe; and as a means of placing important financial proposals before the country it was altogether unsatisfactory and incomplete. It laid Mr. Gladstone open to the damaging reply of Mr. Disraeli, in his Address, that there was nothing definite in it; and that "what is remarkable in his proposals is that, on the one hand, they are accompanied by the disquieting information that the surplus, in order to make it adequate, must be enlarged by an 'adjustment,' which must mean an increase of existing taxes, and that, on the other hand, his principal measures of relief will be the diminution of local taxation and the abolition of the Income Tax—measures which the Conservative party have always favoured, and which the Prime Minister and his friends have always opposed."

Mr. Gladstone's Address was a budget speech incompletely developed and untimely born. It was a sign that he is either ignorant of the arts of the political tactician or indifferent to them. He misreckoned his position and misunderstood his countrymen. He should not have taken them into his counsels; he should have acted first and consulted them afterwards. He should not have asked for leave to carry out his great financial scheme; but should have presented it to Parliament, and embodied it in law,

and then asked for public approval. He should not have invited public confidence, as his Address did, in order that he might do some great work, which was indefinitely revealed; but should have carried out his reforms and then asked for the renewal of the mandate by virtue of which he had been able to accomplish them. He had full power to do this, and it was what his own party and the nation expected of him. He need have had no fear of the Conservative majority in the House of Lords; because the financial reform which was to be the great measure of the year was just the one Liberal measure which their hostility durst not touch. Had they ventured to throw out the Bill which embodied the scheme, the opportunity for an appeal to the country would have been as favourable as the most enthusiastic Liberal, or the most cunning professor of political strategy, could have desired. The Liberal majority and the Liberal Ministry would have come back armed with that power to effect the proposed financial reforms, which, when asked for by Mr. Gladstone as a matter of personal confidence, and asked beforehand, was asked in vain.

The indefiniteness of the Liberal proposals was more than matched by the entire vagueness of the Conservative addresses. Mr. Disraeli confined himself to criticism. Besides the reference to Mr. Gladstone's financial plans, the only domestic topic he touched on was the county franchise, the extension of which he deprecated, though he said that the Conservative party "have proved that they are not

afraid of popular rights." The one reason for their hesitation in sanctioning further legislation was that previously given in the Glasgow speech, that it would "inevitably involve, among other considerable changes, the disfranchisement of, at least, all boroughs in the kingdom comprising less than 40,000 inhabitants." Vague charges against the supporters of the Prime Minister of assailing the Monarchy, impugning the independence of the House of Lords, sanctioning Home Rule, and desiring to disestablish the English Church, were described as the "solemn issues" which the impending election must decide. The Ministers were accused of incessant and harassing legislation; and the people were told that there was nothing they so much disliked as "unnecessary restraint and meddling interference in their affairs." "Generally speaking," added the Opposition Leader, "I should say of the Administration of the past five years, that it would have been better for us all had there been a little more energy in our foreign policy and a little less in our domestic legislation." Then followed the most striking paragraph in the Address, which must be quoted in full. "By an act of folly or of ignorance rarely equalled," wrote Mr. Disraeli, "the present Ministry relinquished a Treaty which secured us the freedom of the Straits of Malacca for our trade with China and Japan, and they at the same time, entering on the West Coast of Africa into those 'equivocal and entangling engagements' which the Prime Minister now deprecates, involved us in the Ashantee War. The honour of the country now

requires that we should prosecute that war with the vigour necessary to ensure success; but when that honour is vindicated, it will be the duty of Parliament to inquire by what means we were led into a costly and destructive contest, which neither Parliament nor the country has ever sanctioned, and of the necessity or justice of which, in its origin, they have not been made aware."

Such was the reply of the Opposition Leader to the challenge thrown down by the Prime Minister. It contained no statement of political principles, and no outline of legislative measures. Like his speeches, it was made up of criticisms of the Ministry, and vague alarms of "revolutionary tendencies" in some of its supporters. It was the Address of an Opposition chief, not of a statesman expecting office. When Mr. Disraeli wrote it, he probably shared the general expectation that the Ministers would still find themselves at the head of a majority, though it would be greatly reduced in numbers; and that he should occupy, not the commanding position from which Mr. Gladstone had fallen, but only the powerful place of a general who can impose absolute inaction on an enemy whom he cannot venture to meet in battle. He did not even ask for power. Concluding his Address by declaring that the cause of civil liberty and religious freedom depended on the strength and the stability of England, he finished by saying, "I ask you to return me to the House of Commons to resist every proposal which may impair that strength, and to support by every means her Imperial sway."

The charge against the Ministry, that they had relinquished the Straits of Malacca, caused immense amusement all over Europe. Englishmen turned to their atlases to find out where the Straits of Malacca were situated—but the atlases threw no light on the question raised by Mr. Disraeli. The Straits of Malacca run between the middle of the island of Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula. On the Malayan side is English influence, on the Sumatra side are the Dutch, whose control of the kingdom of Siak was announced to Mr. Disraeli's own Foreign Minister, Lord Malmesbury, and acknowledged by him with thanks. Mr. Disraeli had evidently forgotten all about this Treaty; yet if ever the control of the Straits was given up it was at that time. The transactions to which Mr. Disraeli referred were some negotiations carried on with the Dutch in 1871 with respect to Acheen, which stands in the same relation to the Straits of Malacca as that in which the Cornish peninsula stands to the Straits of Dover. Mr. Disraeli had sat in Parliament in 1871, 1872, and 1873, and not a word had been whispered about the relinquishment of this Treaty, and the danger to the traffic through the Straits; but an article in *Fraser's Magazine*, as Mr. Gladstone surmised, greatly enlightened his mind. No guarantee of the freedom of the Straits had ever existed, and therefore none had ever been given up. But Mr. Disraeli had to compose an election Address in a hurry, and looked round him for some charge of negligence in foreign affairs with which to spice it. He had been talking vague

generalities about the decline of our influence abroad to excited audiences, but an election Address seemed to need some specific statement of Ministerial delinquency. The article in *Fraser's Magazine* suggested the charge about the Straits of Malacca, and Mr. Disraeli caught it up, as a man in urgent want of some weapon of offence grasps the first thing that comes to his hand. It was ridiculously inappropriate, but not more so than many of Mr. Disraeli's statements on topics which other people regard as serious. Mr. Disraeli has never found in the party he leads any great susceptibility to ridicule. No statesman of modern times has been laughed at so much ; but none has been so little damaged by the laughter. No public man of the foremost rank has said so many foolish things ; but none other could have got over one half of the difficulties Mr. Disraeli has thus created for himself. His facility for getting into a scrape is happily more than balanced by his skill and audacity in cutting his way out. The public laughed at his pretended discovery about the Straits of Malacca, and then put its affairs unreservedly into his hands. It would not judge a successful romancist by a statesman's standard, but it called him to do a statesman's work.

The issue placed before the country by Mr. Gladstone was never definitely taken up. The abolition of the income-tax failed as a cry probably because the prosperity of the country was so great, that the mass of the people were indifferent to questions of taxation. Mr. Gladstone's colleagues took up his financial

scheme, but it was evident that they did not hope to win by its means. Mr. Forster, in his Address, referred to that of Mr. Gladstone to explain the reasons for the dissolution, and based his claim for re-election solely on the whole course of his political life. Mr. Cardwell named as the first thing the new Parliament would have to do, the decision by whom the distribution of the surplus should be made; and Lord Hartington expressed doubts about the extension of the franchise to the agricultural labourers, and said that the new Parliament would have to deal with the great questions of taxation. Mr. Lowe was more combative. He boasted that the Government had "been able to carry the country through a European war without offending either party, without compromising the dignity of England, and without any injury to her allies. Had Government," he continued, "been in other and 'more energetic' hands, we might have found ourselves carrying on active hostilities against France, in order to prevent the possibility of a French invasion of the Saxon provinces of Prussia." These words were not much noticed when they were written, but the last few years of government in the "more energetic" hands of which Mr. Lowe spoke, have shown a significance in them which makes them well worthy of recall. Sir Stafford Northcote in his Address followed Mr. Disraeli's example. He told the public that it was "vain to discuss schemes of which the attractive portion only is presented to our view." He denied "that there was any reaction from that general spirit

of progress which has animated the people of this country under different Administrations for the last half century, though there are many symptoms of a reaction from the excessive confidence which has been accorded to a particular school arrogating to itself the title of Liberal, and of uneasiness at the language held, and the programme announced, by some of its more advanced disciples." He wished all great matters of legislation "to be dealt with in a liberal but conservative spirit." This was, perhaps, the truest account given in any of the election addresses of the actual condition of the public mind. Mr. Goschen, however, in a speech he delivered during the election in the City of London, summed up the feeling of the middle classes in a single happy phrase. "It is said that the country is weary of the Government. If it is weary, it is the weariness of fastidious prosperity, and not the passionate anger of a poorer or less happy people."

The state of unreadiness which these election addresses revealed in the leaders on both sides soon became evident in the constituencies. Everybody was angry with Mr. Gladstone for springing the dissolution so suddenly on the country. Mr. Disraeli told the electors of Buckinghamshire that it was "essentially un-English." Many members of Parliament were abroad, and had to hurry home to look after their seats; election managers were not ready with their canvassing lists; the Liberal Committees had not looked out for candidates; everybody was taken by surprise, and everywhere "there was mounting in

hot haste," as at Brussels on the eve of Waterloo. In this confusion there was no chance of adjusting differences, healing divisions, or creating organization. The opponents of the Government were united enough on the one point of opposition to it; but nothing whatever was done to rally its friends. Indeed, some of the alienated sections of the Liberal party thought that the financial scheme had been put in the front for the purpose of driving into the background the issue in which they were interested. The London Nonconformist Committee, which had played a considerable part in the discussion on the Education Act, expressed regret and surprise that the Premier had almost entirely ignored the questions affecting religious equality, and advised Nonconformists resolutely to assert their views "to the disregard of mere party ties." The Nottingham Nonconformists resolved not to vote for any candidate who did not pledge himself to Universal School Boards, one Board School in each school district, and the unconditional repeal of the 25th clause. In many of the towns, and in the rural districts, the Dissenters held similar language. Their coolness to the Government had been a main feature of the political situation for three or four years. At a great Conference at Manchester, energetic speeches had been made and strong resolutions passed, expressive of want of confidence in the educational policy of the Government. An active Committee, with its head-quarters at Birmingham, had carried on a vigorous agitation against this part of the Ministerial policy, and the breach between the

Government and this large, active, and most important section of its supporters was never healed.

This agitation damaged the Government in two ways, one of which seems to have been entirely overlooked. Among the active members of the Liberal party in every constituency, there are good Churchmen as well as active Dissenters; supporters of voluntary schools as well as advocates of school boards; clergymen who think they ought to teach their religious views to the children in the national schools, as well as men who regard religion as a purely private concern with which no public institution should be mixed up. The dissatisfied Dissenters frightened these timid Churchmen, who utterly failed to grasp the distinction between limiting State instruction to secular matters, and making all education purely secular, or irreligious. While, therefore, the Nonconformists were lukewarm on the one hand, many Churchmen, who usually act with them, were suspicious and reluctant on the other hand. This division of feeling led to the most striking feature which the canvass of this election presented. In many places the Tory candidates announced themselves as "the Scriptural candidates." The walls of Reading, for example, were covered with placards—"Attenborough and the Bible," "Mackenzie and the Bible;" Mr. Attenborough and Mr. Mackenzie being the Conservative candidates. In some towns the Liberal candidates were described as secularists; and all over the country the Conservative party was represented as the party of Bible education, as opposed

to atheistic teaching. The public-houses had their own quarrel with the Government, which, in the Act of 1872, had shortened their hours of opening, and applied some other restrictions in the interest of public order and morality. They consequently made common cause with the clergy; and the zeal for the Bible which suddenly took hold of the Licensed Victuallers and the Beerhouse-keepers must have suggested to many excellent evangelical people that their millennium was at hand. The windows of public-houses were placarded with appeals on behalf of the Bible; enthusiastic assemblies of roysterers and toppers made the low ceilings of tap-rooms shake with cheers for the Bible; and publicans and sinners of every degree put all other politics aside that they might save the Bible. It is hardly surprising that this unwonted zeal deceived the very elect of the evangelical clergy and their friends. We are reluctant to suspect the motives of an unexpected ally, and many clergymen probably thought that the publicans had really awoken to a sense of the infinite value of the good old Book. At any rate, they accepted the alliance, and were heartily faithful to it. The "Scriptural candidates" all went in for the free use of the Bible in the schools, and the freer consumption of Beer in the public-houses, and parson and publican joined in their support. The public-house found itself allied to the rectory or the vicarage; the tap-room and the school-room were engaged in similar political propaganda; the Bible was enthroned behind the tippling-bar, and the right of the people to due

indulgence in stimulating drinks was preached, or at least agitated for, from the sacred desk. This alliance was the main feature in the election contest. Everything else was dwarfed by it. The issue raised in Mr. Gladstone's Address was forgotten ; Mr. Disraeli's blundering was overlooked ; great questions of national policy were ignored ; the Liberal candidates found themselves everywhere put on the defensive by charges of tampering with Bible teaching and unduly restricting popular indulgence, and the Conservatives recommended themselves as " Bible " and " Scriptural " candidates, who were opposed to any violent meddling with popular habits, and who, if elected, would frustrate the nefarious schemes of the Liberals to rob poor men of their Beer.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIBERAL OVERTHROW.

AGAINST such a combination as that just described, the election could only be won by union, zeal, and organization on the part of the friends of the Government. The Opposition were united by dislike and fear of a common enemy, and not by any enthusiasm for principles they held in common. There was, indeed, a real but not very powerful Conservative reaction, one element of which, in the fear which Liberal Churchmen had of the designs of Dissenters, has been already pointed out. The other element in the reaction was the creation in the minds of middle-class employers of labour of a similar dread of the action of the Trade Unions of the working men. Mr. Gladstone, in his Address, congratulated the country on "the progressive rise of wages in the agricultural districts." He spoke of this increase "as the natural and proper, though long-delayed, result of economic laws; as the removal of something like a national discredit; as carrying with it a great addition to the stock, never too abundant, of human happiness, and as a new guarantee for the stability of the Throne and institutions of the country." He based on this improvement in the circumstances of the agricultural labourers a suggestion for their political

enfranchisement, for which Lord Hartington in his Address thought the country was hardly prepared. This progressive rise of wages had, however, taken place in all trades ; and so successful had all sections of working people been in forcing up the market value of their labour, that there had been almost a panic among the employers. The farmers had waged a war of social proscription against any middle-class man who took the part of their labourers ; and Liberal tradesmen in country towns found it dangerous to their business to say a good word for that struggling class. In the towns, a similar feeling operated to chill much Liberal zeal. There was not a Liberal Committee in the Kingdom the members of which had not to tell of the defection of friends and neighbours from the Liberal cause on account of quarrels with their workmen. Had the workmen themselves been heartily Liberal, these defections would have had no political consequences. The transference of the employer's vote from the Liberal to the Conservative would have been made up to the Liberals tenfold by the votes of all his men. But the men cared little for politics and a good deal for other things. Some went with the clergy for the Bible ; many more sided with the publicans. There were groups of enthusiasts who thought only of the prosecution of the Claimant—which still dragged along its portentous and discreditable length—and there were others who thought that as the Liberals had had a capital innings, it would be only fair to give the other side a chance. The “weariness of fastidious prosperity” had made

them, for a while, indifferent to political considerations, and alive only to petty sectional jealousies and schemes.

These influences can scarcely be described without seeming to exaggerate them. They never affect very large numbers in any constituency; but comparatively few votes transferred from one side to the other may tell with immense effect on the election. As a rule, the great bulk of each party may be depended on to vote for the party candidates; and this dependence did not fail even the Liberal candidates in 1874. But in times when no great political movement exists, the Liberal party loses a good many of its less attached members; and it did so in this election in more than usual degree. Samson went out and shook himself, but in the Delilah's lap of undisputed power he had been shorn of his locks, and it was not with him as it had been in former times. The elections, however, began with a striking success. The first day at which some of the uncontested borough elections were due was Friday, January 30; and on that day Mr. Bright, Mr. Muntz, and Mr. Dixon were returned for Birmingham unopposed. The perfect organization of the Liberal party in that great borough enabled it to take the two majority seats and the one minority seat, and made it so irresistibly strong, that in the full tide of Conservative reaction the Conservatives did not venture to run a candidate even for the third place. On the next day, the 31st, the Liberal losses began. Chatham, Guildford, and Kidderminster were lost; and North Lincolnshire,

where the Liberals had not had time to get a candidate, was resigned without a struggle. The Conservatives won six seats and lost but one on this second day of the elections and first of the balloting. By the 3rd of February the Liberals had won ten seats from their opponents and lost twenty-five ; and they had got into a mood in which hearty congratulations were exchanged on Mr. Gladstone's success at Greenwich, where he had been second on the poll, and a local Tory distiller, whose name has never since been heard of in Parliament, took the highest place. At night on the 5th of February, the Liberals summed up their gains and losses, and found that they had taken twenty-five seats from their opponents and lost fifty-six. Two days more brought the close of the first week of the elections, and the end of Liberal hopes. A single fortnight had passed since Mr. Gladstone had flung his election Address before the country ; and it had already become evident that his administration was at an end. When the county returns came in, it was found that the Conservatives would have an actual majority of forty-eight on a division.

This was not the whole extent of the Liberal disaster, though it is the full tale of the Conservative success. In Mr. Gladstone's article on "Electoral Facts," in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1878, he thus states the result to the Liberals of the change which was effected in the Irish representation : "The Liberal majority reckoned to have been returned from Ireland was at once found to be illusory. In truth,

out of the 105 Irish members, the Liberals were little more than a dozen. The period immediately following the Church Act and the Land Act had been chosen as one appropriate for a formal severance of the Irish National party from the general body of British Liberals. Their number was no less than fifty-eight, an actual majority of the Irish representation. They assumed the name of Home Rulers; and established a separate parliamentary organization. On some questions of Liberal opinion, co-operation was still continued. But, as regards the party, the weight of the Home Rulers has clearly told more in favour of the Ministry than of the Opposition; and the Liberal party would have been stronger, not weaker, had the entire body been systematically absent. The real majority of the Government, therefore, should be measured, at the least, by a comparison with the Liberals alone, reckoning the Home Rulers neither way. Consequently, the total of Liberals returned falls from the figure of 302 to 244: less than the Conservative phalanx of 350 by 106. Thus, through the double action of gain by their opponents, and abandonment by their friends, the Liberals were left in a minority nearly equal to the majority with which, basking in the smiles of Fortune, they had begun the Parliament of 1868-74."

The English borough elections, however, really turned the scale, and they deserve a more minute study than they have ever yet received. Perhaps the most instructive feature of the whole contest is

to be found in the behaviour of those constituencies, both borough and county, in which the striking Liberal defeats of the previous year had taken place. The earliest indication of the "Conservative reaction" had been given at the beginning of February, 1872, when an election had taken place in the North-West Riding of Yorkshire, owing to the death of Sir Francis Crossley. The candidates were Mr. Holden and Mr. F. S. Powell, and Mr. Powell won the seat; but at the general election the Liberals, who had thoroughly reorganized themselves in the meantime, won it back. A similar reversal of a verdict even more lately given occurred in Renfrewshire, where Colonel Campbell won a Liberal seat for the Conservatives by defeating Colonel Mure in the autumn of 1873. This election was universally regarded as a sign that the Conservative reaction had deeply affected even the Scottish constituencies; but at the general election Colonel Mure won back the seat by a good majority. In the same autumn there had been a great contest at Hull, and Mr. E. J. Reed, the Liberal candidate, had been defeated by the Conservative, Colonel Pease; but Colonel Pease never took his seat; and Hull came back to its Liberal allegiance in February. As though further to prove how much the importance of isolated votes had been exaggerated, Stroud itself reversed in February the decision of January, by returning a new Liberal member at the head of the poll, placing its old Liberal member second, and giving the new Conservative favourite the third place. This election was

voided on petition, and in May a Conservative and a Liberal were returned. The Conservative, in his turn, was unseated, and a Liberal returned in his place ; but he also was unseated by a third petition, and another Liberal elected. Stroud has been represented by two Liberals from that time till now.

These striking examples of the discipline and courage the Liberal party learns in temporary defeat may be placed side by side with more numerous instances of the ruin caused by its divisions. In some of the largest constituencies in the kingdom, Liberal seats were lost by the mere scattering of Liberal votes among more candidates than could be returned. Four of the London boroughs were thus divided. In Chelsea the Liberal candidates were Sir Charles Dilke and Sir Henry Hoare. Mr. Gordon was the Conservative, and Mr. Kiell, as a third Liberal, effected a diversion in his favour. Sir Charles Dilke headed the poll with 7,217 votes ; Mr. Gordon came second with 7,172 ; Sir Henry Hoare was third with 6,701 ; and Mr. Kiell came lagging behind with 1,967. It was known that many of his voters were plumpers. One third of these given to Sir Henry Hoare would have returned him ; but the voters threw them away on Mr. Kiell and let in the Conservative. In Southwark the Liberals were more deeply divided, with the same result. Mr. Locke headed the poll with 5,901 votes ; for the second place two Liberals and a Conservative struggled. The Conservative, Mr. Marcus Beresford, received 5,716 votes ; the two Liberals had between

them 6,617 votes, 3,496 for the late Mr. G. Odger, and 3,121 for Mr. Andrew Dunn, to whom accordingly the Tories owe the possession of the seat. In the Tower Hamlets four Liberals went to the poll; and only one Conservative, who consequently came out at the top. Mr. Ritchie polled 7,228 votes; Mr. Samuda followed with 5,900, then Mr. Currie with 5,022. Mr. Ayrton followed with 3,202 votes and Admiral Maxse with 2,992. Here it is obvious that neither Mr. Ayrton nor Admiral Maxse had any business in the field. The event proved that the proper Liberal candidates were Mr. Samuda and Mr. Currie, and had they stood alone there could have been no contest. The Liberals together polled 17,116 votes; and granting that all the votes given to Mr. Ritchie were plumpers, and all the Liberal votes were split, the Conservative poll only represented 14,456 votes. In Marylebone the Liberal division left less mark on the poll; as Mr. T. Hughes retired on the very eve of the balloting. The Liberal division of which Mr. Hughes allowed himself to be made the representative, did its work none the less effectually for his retirement. In a constituency with 32,000 registered electors, a poll of 9,849 sufficed to return Mr. Forsyth at the head of the list. Sir Thomas Chambers came next with 8,251. Mr. Daniel Grant followed with 7,882; and Mr. Hughes received 294 votes. His voters, obviously, stayed at home; and the figures as clearly show that the borough was sacrificed by Liberal division, as though they had gone to the poll and given their votes for Mr. Hughes.

Outside London, Liberal division was equally disastrous. Nottingham is almost a typical case. In 1868 a great effort had been made to unite the Liberal party, and at an aggregate meeting, at which 7,000 electors were present, the names of Mr. R. Osborne, the sitting member, who had been returned by Conservative help, Mr. C. Seeley, Jun., and Mr. P. W. Clayden, had been submitted, and the two latter names chosen by an overwhelming majority. In these circumstances Mr. Osborne hesitated to come forward, and Messrs. Seeley and Clayden received such general support that a fortnight before the election Mr. A. G. Marten, the Conservative candidate, who had been nearly three months in the field, withdrew; and ten days before the election the Liberals were rejoicing in the apparent certainty of a walk over. Mr. Osborne, meanwhile, had come to the resolution to stand, and made his appearance in the town. The Liberal division thus threatened roused the Conservatives into activity, and Sir R. Clifton and Colonel Wright came forward a few days before the election as Conservative candidates. Mr. Osborne persisted in going to the poll, and, as a consequence, the two Conservatives were returned, the two Liberal candidates came next, and Mr. Osborne found himself last on the list of five. The sequel, however, is worth remarking. A petition against the return was lodged, and Colonel Wright consented to withdraw at the end of a year if it was not pressed. Colonel Wright fulfilled his promise; and Sir Robert Clifton died. There were thus two single bye-elections within a year, and at each of

them the Liberal candidate was returned; so that Nottingham was represented by two Liberals at the dissolution in 1874. But the old division broke out again with precisely the same results as in 1868. Four Liberals went to the poll, and received between them 11,106 votes; but two Conservatives, who divided between them 10,058 votes, were at the head of the poll, and have represented Nottingham, and its self-disfranchised Liberal party, all through the existing Parliament. Northampton has been equally unwise. Four Liberals and two Conservatives went to the poll in the February election, and though Mr. Charles Gilpin won one Liberal seat, Mr. Phipps, a Conservative, headed the poll, Lord Henley and Mr. Bradlaugh dividing between them a sufficient number of Liberals to have placed either of them five or six hundred a-head of Mr. Phipps. This partial defeat failed to teach the Liberal electors the folly of their divisions, and on the death of Mr. Gilpin, in October, 1874, two Liberal candidates came forward for the seat. Mr. W. Fowler then polled 1,836, and Mr. Bradlaugh 1,766—a Liberal vote of 3,602; but Mr. Merewether, the Conservative, polled 2,171, and took the seat. The great constituency of Leeds was rent by a smaller, but equally disastrous, quarrel. The Liberal candidates were Mr. R. M. Carter and Mr. E. Baines; but Dr. F. R. Lees presented himself in the teetotal interest, and ensured the easy triumph of the candidate of the Licensed Victuallers, Mr. Wheelhouse, with Mr. Tennant for a colleague. Mr. Lees polled 5,954 votes to 11,850 given for Mr. E. Baines, while

Mr. R. M. Carter headed the list with 15,890. It is evident, therefore, that but for the intrusion of Dr. Lees, two Liberals would have headed the poll, and left the two Conservatives to fight together for the third seat. In the agricultural borough of Cricklade four Liberals went to the poll, and though the two superfluous candidates received between them only 537 votes, less than half that number added to Mr. Cadogan's vote would have placed him second, so that by this dispersion one Liberal seat was clearly lost. At Stoke-upon-Trent there were three Liberals and one Conservative in the field for two seats. A Liberal headed the race with 6,700 votes, the Conservative came next with 6,180, and two Liberals followed behind who had divided 10,567 ballots between them, and thus defeated each other. At Scarborough, one Liberal and one Conservative were returned; but two unsuccessful Liberals, who struggled with one another and the Conservative for the place, polled between them nearly three hundred more votes than the Conservative, and thus skilfully split up a Liberal majority to let him in. At Wigan three Liberals fought for two seats, and, of course, two Conservatives got in, though the Liberal votes, properly distributed, might have put a Liberal candidate in the second place. The evil of division spread even to counties. In Radnorshire a Conservative headed the poll with 889 votes, then followed two defeated Liberals, the first with 832 votes, the second with 100. Putting all these self-inflicted losses together, we find that the Liberals made a

present to their opponents of thirteen seats, counting twenty-six on a party division in the House.

Nor was this all. At Bradford there was a Liberal division, which did not let in a Conservative because, nominally, no Conservative stood. But it gave Mr. Forster a colleague in Mr. Ripley who is a Liberal only in name, and who has voted with the Government in every critical division. Liberal scattering gave Mr. E. Jenkins a similar colleague in Mr. Yeaman, at Dundee, where Sir John Ogilvy and Mr. J. M. D. Meiklejohn divided between them enough Liberal votes to have placed either of them at the head of the poll. At Glasgow, if no seat was actually lost, a seat which might have been won was missed, for enough Liberal votes were polled to return three members instead of two, had they been wisely distributed. At Boston two Liberals were returned by great majorities, but Mr. Parry, one of the new members, had sent gifts of coals to poor people in the town, which had been distributed by his political friends; and though at the time of the distribution nobody thought an election was approaching, it was held to be a corrupt transaction, and Mr. Parry was unseated, and rendered incapable of sitting in the existing Parliament. To make the unaccountable caprice of this decision the more puzzling, Mr. Parry's seat was given to the Conservative who stood below him on the poll with only 996 votes to Mr. Parry's 1,347. Mr. Malcolm held the seat thus capriciously given him till August, 1878, when he resigned it to fight a losing battle against Lord Colin

Campbell, in Argyllshire, and as Mr. Parry cannot be a candidate while this Parliament lasts, Mr. T. Garfit, a local banker, was returned without opposition. It is one further proof of the discouragement of the Liberal party at the sudden election of February, that with a few striking exceptions, the Liberal vote at bye-elections since held has been much larger than it was at the general election. In ordinary times the poll is smaller at casual elections than at those which take place after a dissolution of Parliament.

The county elections were not so disastrous for the Liberals as the borough elections, because there was less to lose. The Liberals have never had any hold on the counties in the Reformed Parliament. As a rule, the country squires have the county representation in their hands, and they are nearly all Conservatives. The election of 1874 was, moreover, a time of great hope in a Conservative Ministry on the part of the farmers. Early in 1872, Sir Massey Lopes had carried a resolution against the Government, by a majority of 100, declaring that "the ratepayers in counties and boroughs ought to be relieved, either in whole or in part, from charges for the administration of justice, police, and lunatics." Nothing had been done to give effect to this resolution, and the owners and occupiers of land all over the kingdom were full of anticipation of what a Conservative Ministry would do for them. Hence the Conservative candidates swept the field. A series of political maps, published in the beginning

of the present year, showed the colour of the representation at a glance. The county map of England and Wales is accurately described by the *Daily News*,* as “an ocean or desert of blue dotted only with isles or oases of yellow. Out of Wales there is not a single county which is entirely represented in the present Parliament by Liberals. But for the one Liberal member sent by each of the divisions of Derbyshire, and a similar halving of West Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire, and South Hants, there would not be a gleam of yellow, except in the three-cornered counties (Berks, Bucks, Cambridge, Dorset, Hereford, Herts, and Oxon,) from the Welsh border to the German Ocean, and from Devonshire and the South Coast up to Yorkshire. Devonshire sends one Liberal out of six members, and Cornwall three out of four.” The Scottish farmers are less Conservative. There is a small Conservative majority in the county representation; but one of the most striking events in the present Parliament has been the transference of a county seat, in the person of its occupant, from the Conservative to the Liberal side. East Aberdeenshire returned in February, 1874, a member who preferred to describe himself as a Whig. He died in December, 1875, and the late Mr. George Hope, of Fentonbarns, was brought forward as the Liberal candidate. Mr. Hope was universally respected, but Scotch Presbyterians could not condone his Unitarianism, and the seat was lost, as that in County Down was lost two and a half years later, by the same pre-

* *Daily News*, March 21, 1879.

judice of Presbyterianism against the Unitarianism of Mr. Andrews. Sir Alexander Hamilton-Gordon, who won the seat, differed from other Conservatives on the foreign policy of the Government, and after publicly complaining that the intolerance and rudeness of his neighbours on the Conservative benches rendered it impossible longer to sit among them, transferred himself to the other side of the House. The incident reveals the character of the Conservative majority. The Conservative ranks have been swollen by numbers of young men whose only claim to be elected was their social position, who are entirely ignorant of politics, whose large lungs and little brains enable them to shout down opponents with whom they cannot argue, and who have helped to make the present Parliament one of the most idle and the least intelligent of modern times.

The Liberal losses were almost as serious in persons as in numbers. The defeat of Mr. Chichester Fortescue in County Louth may be set over against that of Sir John Pakington at Droitwich. Each was solaced with a peerage. The loss of Mr. Bonham Carter's seat at Winchester removed from the Liberal side an able and amiable private member, who had got into the wrong place by being made Chairman of Committees, a duty for which he had no qualification, and in the discharge of which he had sadly failed. The defeat of Mr. Fawcett at Brighton, of Mr. Peter Rylands at Warrington, of Mr. Jacob Bright at Manchester, of Mr. Hibbert at Oldham, of Sir Charles Wingfield at Gravesend, of Sir R. Torrens

and Mr. W. Fowler at Cambridge, of Mr. Ayrton in the Tower Hamlets, of Mr. Walter Morrison at Plymouth, of Mr. J. Delaware Lewis at Devonport, Mr. Otway at Chatham, and Mr. R. Eykyn at Windsor, took away distinct and marked individualities from the House, and lowered its intellectual status, and its really representative character, by putting nobodies in their places. Mr. Sampson Lloyd and Mr. A. G. Marten are respectable exceptions to the rule of obscurity under which the new Conservative members fall, and Captain Bedford Pim takes care not to be obscure. A constituency which could cashier Sir Charles Wingfield to put Mr. Pim in his place, ought to consist of people who had sold out of consols to invest their whole fortunes in Honduras or Paraguayan or Costa Rican loans. Mr. Osborne's defeat at Waterford made the new House poorer in wit; and Mr. Bouverie's rejection at Kilmarnock, though it was on behalf of a more progressive Liberal, made it less accomplished in Parliamentary lore. It was at once admitted on all hands that the new Parliament would be much duller than that which had been so unfortunately dissolved.

Mr. Disraeli showed the most admirable moderation in all his public references to this overwhelming victory. No hint of reversing any decision of the former Parliament appeared in any of his speeches. He was even more chary of promises in the first exultation of success than he had been before the struggle. Speaking at Buckingham, before the county elections were quite over, but when the boroughs had already

decided the fate of the Ministry, Mr. Disraeli declined to give any outline of possible legislation. He congratulated the country that his one political discovery, the Conservative working-man, had given proof of his existence and activity; congratulated Stafford and Morpeth on having returned actual working-men to represent them, and declared that there was no quarrel between capital and labour, while landlords and tenants had perfect confidence in each other. He had changed his tone with respect to the abolition of the income-tax, as the elections went on; and had declared himself in favour of reducing duties on articles of general consumption rather than of abolishing them. Speaking at Newport Pagnell, he had said, "I think that policy has been already carried to too great an extent. Let us first realize the surplus. Let the financial year be terminated. Let us see what we have in hand, and let us distribute those means in a manner advantageous to the country." Thus the pledge of the election Address had been taken back before the issue had been fought out, and Mr. Disraeli found himself at the head of a Parliamentary majority which would soon place him in power, without one solitary pledge being exacted from him as to the use he would make of it. He had only been committed to any political principle or legislative or diplomatic course by his criticisms on his predecessors. The election had not turned on rival policies; it had scarcely turned even on rival persons; in mere weariness of the "ins" the nation had called the "outs" to power.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

MR. GLADSTONE and his colleagues lost no time in recognizing the national decision. The Cabinet met on the 16th of February, just four weeks after that January meeting at which the fatal folly of the dissolution had been resolved on. The question now was, how to die with dignity. The proper place for a Ministry to receive its sentence is the House of Commons; and the constitutional means of despatch is a hostile vote. Mr. Disraeli had not waited the slow operation of this constitutional machinery in 1868, but had counted the returns in the newspapers and anticipated the hostile vote they indicated by resignation. The Cabinet resolved to take the same course, and on the 17th of February Mr. Gladstone went down to Windsor with a bundle of resignations in his hand. His last advice to the Queen was, of course, that she should send for Mr. Disraeli, who was accordingly summoned to Windsor, and went there on the next day. It did not take him long to form a Cabinet, and he returned to the Queen on the 20th with a complete list. The list of Ministers exhibited several innovations. The late Cabinet had consisted of fifteen and sixteen members; Mr. Disraeli's

contained but twelve. The Chief Secretary for Ireland; the Presidents of the Board of Trade and of the Local Government Board; and the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, who had been Cabinet Ministers under Mr. Gladstone, were kept out of the Cabinet by Mr. Disraeli. His choice of colleagues was, with one exception, generally approved. The Cabinet was as follows:—

First Lord of the Treasury .	Mr. Disraeli.
Lord Chancellor . . .	Lord Cairns.
Lord President of the Council	The Duke of Richmond.
Lord Privy Seal . . .	Lord Malmesbury.
Foreign Secretary . . .	Lord Derby.
Secretary for India . . .	Lord Salisbury.
Colonial Secretary . . .	Lord Carnarvon.
Secretary for War . . .	Mr. Gathorne Hardy.
Home Secretary . . .	Mr. R. A. Cross.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Mr. G. Ward Hunt.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Sir Stafford Northcote.
Postmaster-General . . .	Lord John Manners.

The public heard with some surprise that Mr. Ward Hunt, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in Mr. Disraeli's former Government, was to go to the Admiralty, for which no experience fitted him. Mr. Cross's appointment to one of the chief Secretaryships of State was a popular innovation. Mr. Cross had had no official experience. He sat in Parliament as member for Preston from 1857 to 1862, and attracted but little notice. In 1868 he was one of the success-

ful Tory candidates who defeated Mr. Gladstone in the election for South-West Lancashire, and the contest with so distinguished an opponent gave him a certain prominence in the ranks of the unofficial members of the Opposition. He usually occupied the seat just below the gangway, which Mr. Rylands has since made his own; and during the Education Debates, as well as in those on the Irish Land and Irish Church, made himself prominent as an opponent of the Government. He spoke in a hard loud voice, without variety of intonation, in a manner something like that of a Chairman of Quarter Sessions charging a jury of tenant farmers. His tone, since he became a Minister, has been more deprecatory and conciliatory; but each sentence is spoken separately, with precisely the intonation it would have if it stood alone. Mr. Cross, therefore, is no orator; his speeches are business statements, which it is better to read than to hear; but there is a tone of practical common-place about them which is admirably suited to the most common-place of Parliaments. It was, however, with some astonishment that the public saw him suddenly elevated to the position of a Cabinet Minister, without going through any of the lower stages of official rank and experience. The appointment was a bold experiment, but it is justified by its success. Mr. Cross has been a very judicious and popular Home Secretary. He has not made half the mistakes in five and a half years which Mr. Lowe made in five and a half months; and he has probably done almost as much to make the Government popular as

Mr. Lowe did to make the late Administration disliked. Not being brilliant, like Mr. Lowe, he has tried to be useful ; and instead of going round the world treading on the corns of vulgar people, he has put them at ease with themselves and with the Government.

When the new Ministers went down to Windsor they found a characteristic Conservative crowd assembled to greet them. These worshippers of the rising sun represented the feeling of their composite party, and set an example which other crowds of sympathizers improved upon in after days. The "interests" were exultant at a victory which not only rescued them from imaginary perils, but gave them the great national surplus for spoil. They soon showed some hurry to begin the division. The new Ministers were not only attended by shouting crowds, but badgered by deputations. One day the income-tax repealers called to remind the Prime Minister of his pledges ; another day the Local Taxation League wrung from Mr. Disraeli a promise "to deal with the matter in such a way as we hope will completely satisfy those just demands which you have so long brought before the country ;" then followed a clerical deputation protesting against the withdrawal of allowances from the public purse to Consular Chaplains abroad. The brewers visited the Chancellor of the Exchequer again and again to urge the repeal of the brewers' licence-tax ; the Central Chamber of Agriculture reminded him of the many Conservative promises of a repeal of the Malt Tax ; members of the sugar trade urged the repeal of the sugar duties ; and Lord

Sandon was obliged to tell a deputation from the Voluntary Schools that they practically asked the repeal of the rule of payment by results. Mr. Cross had to listen to successive hosts of teetotalers; to the Beer and Wine Trade Defence League; and to various forms of appeal on behalf of the publicans for the expected reward of their great services in the elections. So numerous and so clamorous were publicans, beerhouse keepers, supporters of clerical schools, and other claimants, of a share in the great Liberal legacy, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer soon had to tell them that vast as the surplus was, it was not actually inexhaustible. Meanwhile fortune seemed to smile on the new Ministry. On the 27th of February the morning papers contained the news of the capture of Coomassie and the practical conclusion of a war which during the period of the elections had worn a most threatening aspect for the British forces. On the next day the preposterously protracted trial of the Tichborne Claimant came to an end with its 188th day; having lasted just long enough to create a diversion of interest all through the election, which told in favour of the Conservative candidates, and crowded the election news and even the election speeches of all but statesmen of the very foremost rank into mere corners of the papers.

Parliament met on the 5th of March, and the new Ministry showed its moderation by proposing the re-election of Mr. Brand, who had been selected for the Speakership by the late Government. Mr. Brand, who had been Speaker for the past two years, had

shown peculiar fitness for his very difficult task, and it was wise not to risk the appointment of a new man, who might have reproduced the respectable failure of the late Lord Ossington, or might have been as ill-adapted to the Speakership as Mr. Bonham Carter had been to the Chairmanship of Committees. While the new Ministers were being re-elected the Duke of Edinburgh brought home his Russian bride, who was welcomed to London in a heavy snowstorm on the 12th of March. On the 19th the two Houses met, after an adjournment for the elections, and the Queen's Speech was read. It began by an assurance of the continued friendliness of our relations with all foreign Powers; and then followed a paragraph which must be reproduced in full, as it stands in most striking relation to after events in the history of the Administration. "The marriage of my son, the Duke of Edinburgh, with the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia, is at once a source of happiness to myself and a pledge of friendship between two great Empires." Neither the Queen nor her Ministers probably had the slightest suspicion when these words were used that one chief moral which history would deduce from the story of the Administration then just opening, would be the utter worthlessness of such pledges of friendship. The announcement of the close of the Ashantee war and of the beginning of an Indian famine completed the foreign part of the speech. The financial paragraph was curt. "The estimates for the expenditure" were promised, but not a word was said about remit-

ting taxation or readjusting revenue. The legislative promises were few. "The delay and expense attending the transfer of land in England" were declared to be "a reproach to our system of law," and measures were promised to remove it. The rearrangement of the Judicature, effected with respect to England, was to be extended to Ireland; the law of Scotland was to be assimilated to the same system, and a Scotch Land Transfer Bill to be introduced. A Royal Commission was announced as to the law of Master and Servant, of Conspiracy and of Trade Offences; and a measure to amend the laws relating to Friendly Societies. The great Beer interest was promised payment for its services in the shape of a Bill "dealing with such parts of the Acts regulating the sale of intoxicating liquors as have given rise to complaints which appear to deserve the interference of Parliament."

The studied moderation which Mr. Disraeli had imposed on himself and his followers appeared in a striking form in the debate on the Address. Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, in moving the Address, thought it needful to apologize for the meagre agenda set forth in the Queen's Speech. In doing this he turned on Mr. Gladstone, accusing him of wasting two months of Parliamentary time. Mr. Gladstone, he said, was "determined to astonish the country, and the country, in its turn, seemed also bent on astonishing the right honourable gentleman." Mr. Gladstone made a quiet and dignified reply, expressing the expectation he had felt of complaints from his own

side, and distinctly stating that the elections at Stroud and Newcastle-on-Tyne in January, and the two more vacancies which immediately afterwards occurred, "in which it was clear that they would go as the two opening vacancies of the month had been disposed of," had rendered an appeal to the country desirable. He regretted the result of the dissolution; but did not regret the dissolution itself. Mr. Disraeli replied to Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell in different terms. He said that in the case of so old a member he had not intimated to him, as is usually the case, what course his observations should take, and Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell had spoken without consulting anybody. Mr. Gladstone had expected many observations from his friends in consequence of the policy of the dissolution, but, said Mr. Disraeli, "they were silent, and I admire their taste and feeling. If I had been a follower of a Parliamentary chief as eminent as the right honourable gentleman, even if I thought he had erred, I should have been disposed rather to exhibit sympathy than to offer criticism; I should remember the great victories* he had fought and won. I should remember his illustrious career; its continuous success and splendour; not its accidental or even disastrous mistakes."

Mr. Gladstone had appeared in his place as the leader of the Opposition; and opposed both amendments made to the Address, one by Mr. Torrens, referring to the Indian Famine, the other in favour of Irish Home Rule, by Mr. Butt. On the 12th he

* Hansard, vol. 218, col. 90.

had, however, written to Lord Granville explaining that though he had issued the usual circular to Liberal members on the occasion of the opening of Parliament, he "could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service." "I am anxious," he continued, "that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs, that at my age I must preserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving more than an occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present session. I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the session of 1875, to consider whether there would be any advantage in placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged." Mr. Gladstone was, however, quite willing that another leader should be chosen at once if the party desired it. But the party felt no need for action in the matter. They were much rallied by their opponents as to the supposed vacancy in the leadership, but the vacancy was a prospective one, and Mr. Gladstone was leader on his own terms of only occasional attendance. Mr. Cardwell and Mr. Chichester Fortescue had gone from the front bench to the place where dissolutions cease from troubling, and politicians who have known the fickleness of popular constituencies are at rest. Mr. Forster, Mr. Goschen, or Mr. Lowe naturally took the first place,

according to the topics under discussion, in the leader's absence, and no inconvenience resulted from the arrangement.

There seemed at first to be no chance of party strife. The Opposition had nothing to oppose. Alarmed voters who read the debates must have been astonished to find that the men they had elected to save the country from the destructive policy of the Liberal Ministry, had nothing but praises for their predecessors and no other policy to substitute for theirs. On the first day of the Session Lord Derby, the new Foreign Secretary, told the House of Lords, "All I can say is that, at the present moment the position of the country in regard to our Foreign Relations is most satisfactory. There is no State whatever with which our relations are not most cordial." Speaking on the Ashantee war, Mr. Disraeli said, "We are willing to give the right honourable gentleman and his Government every praise for the preparations they had made." In speaking, on the 30th of March, on the Vote of Thanks to the Ashantee Forces, which was moved by Mr. Disraeli and seconded by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli replied to some complaints which had been made as to the manner of carrying on the war, and the only thing which even looked like a passage at arms between the two leaders, was that Mr. Disraeli said that Sir Garnet Wolseley "went without troops, because it was then the plan of the Government that the war should be carried on by Native levies." Mr. Gladstone replied that the statement of the Prime Minister had "gone a little beyond, and at the same

time fallen a little short of, an actual description of the views of the Government at the time." They had deplorably little information till Sir Garnet Wolseley got to the Gold Coast. There were there a limited number of British troops, "and it was not till the summer was far advanced we abandoned the hope that, by that force alone acting in concurrence with that portion of the Natives who are opposed to the Ashantees, a settlement of the matter might be brought about."* Of the conduct of the late Government with respect to the Indian Famine, the new Ministers were equally laudatory. Lord Salisbury, speaking of the attacks on Lord Northbrook, said, "I should not be doing justice to my own feelings if I did not say how much reason we have to be grateful for his exertions, and how much reason we have to admire the vigour, judgment, and self-denial with which he has applied himself to this tremendous responsibility. All of us on this side of the House always admired his ability, but we had no notion how his powers would expand under the pressure of responsibility, until we saw the measures he had adopted and the conduct he had pursued in the terrible position in which he found himself placed by this famine. My Lords, we have every reason to repose confidence in him, and I have no doubt that at the end of the year he will have the satisfaction of feeling that millions of human beings owe their lives to his exertions."† Similar praise was given to Lord Northbrook by Lord George Hamilton in the House of Commons, on the 20th of March, the

* Hansard, vol. 218, cols. 413, 422. † Hansard, vol. 218, col. 97.

day after Lord Salisbury's speech. The Under Secretary, in proposing the raising of a loan of £10,000,000 on the credit of the Indian revenues, fully re-echoed all that his chief had said in unqualified praise of Lord Northbrook's Administration.

Perhaps the most remarkable of all the vindictory speeches made by the new Ministers with respect to the policy of their predecessors was that of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, in moving the Army Estimates on the 30th of March. He made it clear in every part of his speech that he disagreed with much that the late Government had done, and intimated that he was quite open to attempt to reverse it, if after further experience he thought such an effort would be wise. The question of Purchase he was content to take as one that could not be reopened, though, he added, "there are many subsidiary questions connected with the abolition of Purchase which still remain to be determined, and I only wish that those who had abolished the system of Purchase had been able while they were in office, to provide for all the different and difficult circumstances which have arisen in consequence, and which I am afraid it will be my painful duty to make arrangements to meet." But the most striking part of his speech was that in which he described the state in which the late Government had left the Army. During the elections the Conservative candidates, and the papers which supported them, had spoken with the greatest indignation of the wretched economy of the late Government, which had discouraged the volunteers, depleted the stores, weakened

the fortifications, neglected to arm the troops, and left the Army in a state in which it was utterly incapable of defending us. Mr. Hardy, however, told a story which absolutely reversed every one of these charges. "We find the supply of stores so full and efficient," he told the House of Commons, "that we can dispense with the payment of £100,000 on this head." The arming of the troops had been going on very effectually, "in a few weeks," he said, "the whole of the infantry will, I hope, have the Martini-Henry rifle. By tomorrow there will be 140,000 Martini-Henry rifles in store, and during the year there will be a further number of 40,000 provided. In stock, there are 60,000,000 rounds of small-arm ammunition ready for issue. With respect to the question of sword bayonet no absolute decision has been come to, but the old bayonet has been adapted to the Martini-Henry rifle at a very small cost—about 2s. each. With respect to gunpowder we have a very large stock, also of pebble powder, and it has been found that common powder can be converted into pebble powder at a very small cost. With respect to these stores, I may say, from the information I have received, and making the statement on the authority of persons perfectly conversant with the subject, they are of a very efficient character; and the Reserves are quite sufficient." Of the Volunteers, Mr. Hardy said, "originally the number of enrolled men—far, however, from efficient men—was 199,000; this year they are only 153,000, but these are efficient, and in paying for them, you are paying for something which

is far more worth having than what formerly existed." As to the Fortifications, he said, they were "of the most efficient character." "The sea defences have all been armed as nearly as possible. They have been armed very efficiently, as I believe, with very heavy ordnance, of a character suited to the defence of the fortifications which require them." * The works had been pushed on with such effect that the whole of the fortifications would be complete in two years' time at a cost of several thousand pounds within the estimate. On the new Intelligence Department, the establishment of which had been bitterly opposed by the permanent officials and the War Office authorities, Mr. Hardy lavished the most indiscriminate praise. He said that the ignorance we were in as to the state of things on the Gold Coast when the Ashantee war broke out, was due to the old clumsy system which the late Government had superseded; and that in future, we should act in such matters on full information.

Mr. Ward Hunt did not follow the example of his colleagues. He came to bury his predecessors, not to praise them. His speech on the Naval Estimates was postponed till the 20th of April, but meanwhile the subject had been more than once mentioned in Parliament. Lord Lauderdale made a long speech on the state of the Navy in the House of Lords on the 23rd of March; declaring that it was in an inefficient state, and that a million a year more ought to have been spent upon it. Lord Malmesbury, on behalf of the Government, declined to express agreement with, or

* Hansard, vol. 218, cols. 433 to 453.

dissent from, these statements ; but when Lord Camperdown showed that “ since 1869, we had launched sixteen ironclads, besides two frigates, nine corvettes, seven sloops, seven gun-vessels and thirty gunboats of various classes,” Lord Lauderdale explained that he had not meant to say that our navy was absolutely weaker, but only that it was relatively weaker, because every other nation was building ironclads. In the House of Commons, there had been a debate on the Naval Reserve ; and another on the state of the Dockyards preceded Mr. Ward Hunt’s statement.

Mr. Hunt, in moving the Navy Estimates on the 20th of April, began by apologizing for his own newness to the work of the Admiralty, and stated that practically he had taken the estimates of his predecessor. His speech was principally historical, and a large part of it was devoted to the vindication of the former Conservative Government and the late Mr. Corry, its First Lord of the Admiralty, from the charges of extravagance which had been brought against them in the election of 1868. Mr. Corry had begun six ironclads in 1867, and four more in 1868 ; thus there were ten left to the Liberal Government to finish. “ I would ask,” said Mr. Hunt, “ where we should have been, as regarded our fleet, had not that policy been pursued by Mr. Corry ? It was the fashion at the time, and shortly afterwards, in the House and in the Press, to decry the extravagance of the Conservative Government, but without that so-called extravagance would my right honourable friend who preceded me have been able to effect the so-called

economies of the Liberal Government?" The Liberals had begun and completed seven ironclads, and had bequeathed six more in various stages of progress to their successors; but, as regarded the ironclad fleet, "the 'extravagant Conservative Governments' might take credit for having added a very large part." He then described the condition of the ironclad fleet, as he had learned it from such scanty opportunities as he had enjoyed. We had fifty-five ironclads, forty-one of which were seagoing, and fourteen, including the *Devastation*, of which he spoke "as the most extraordinary piece of mechanism which human ingenuity has ever devised," were adapted for harbour and coast defence. The list of forty-one included five now building, and their state was "anything but satisfactory." Nine were regarded as obsolete, and only eighteen were actually "effective," in the proper sense, for service during the present year. Having hinted that he might have to propose a supplementary estimate, Mr. Hunt concluded with the following words:—"As long as I remain at the Admiralty, it must be understood that I do not mean to have a fleet on paper; that whatever ships appear as forming a part of the strength of the Navy must be real and effective ships, not dummies. It is with that view I have taken the office which I now hold, and it is with that view I have made the statement which I have had the honour of making to the Committee to-night."*

This speech created much excitement in the country. It was like a spark on tinder. The loud outcry

* Hansard, vol. 218, col. 871.

at the elections had prepared the public mind to find that Liberal economies had starved something or somebody; for it was hard for alarmed voters who had rushed to the ballot-box to save their country, to believe that the whole outcry was a delusion. One by one the new Ministers had given the most astonishingly and unexpectedly favourable reports of the condition of their departments, and a painful feeling was growing up that the nation had been deceived. But here, at last, was real mischief; the serious fire from which all the smoke had come. Mr. Hunt's words were caught up and echoed all through the country by men who felt the need of justifying the alarm they had created at the elections. It came to be generally believed that the new First Lord of the Admiralty had declared that we had mere dummy ships and a paper fleet. *Punch* caught up the prevalent feeling in a cartoon, in which John Bull brought Mr. Goschen and Mr. Ward Hunt to the bar of public opinion with the exclamation, "Ten millions spent on the Navy, and not a ship to my back!" The *Times* copied from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which had made itself the organ of the spending interests, a statement that representations had been made to Mr. Goschen by Sir Alexander Milne and his professional colleagues as to the weakness of the Navy, and that Mr. Goschen, whatever his own views were, had laid these communications before the Cabinet. Mr. Bentinck read the statement to the House, and added that it was tolerably clear, "and intolerably false," exclaimed Mr. Goschen.

The scare was well kept up by such inventions as this for ten days. Mr. Goschen had said in the debate on the 20th of April, that "to tell the country that they (the former Ministry) had been starving the dockyards, that what had been done was insufficient, and yet to abstain from measures to correct the evil, while they had a surplus of £6,000,000, could not be endured." A general expectation prevailed that supplementary estimates of some millions would be proposed; and nobody seemed to notice what Mr. Shaw Lefevre pointed out, in the resumed debate on the 30th of April, that the presumed delinquencies of the late Government in the matter of the Navy, were all to be covered by the insignificant sum of £100,000. In the same adjourned debate, Mr. Ward Hunt himself endeavoured to reassure the country. He denied that his speech had produced the "scare," and said that the alarm had been created by Mr. Goschen himself, who had said that "if the Navy was in the state Mr. Hunt had represented it to be, £6,000,000 was available to put it right." He admitted that the late Mr. Corry had meant to reduce the Navy Estimates in 1869 by £658,000, had he remained in office; and that those of the late Government had risen to very near the amount at which Mr. Corry left them. As to the outlay of millions, Mr. Hunt said that no words had fallen from him which pointed to any such expenditure, and, indeed, he had never contemplated such a thing. "Perhaps, however," Mr. Hunt continued, "I am in fault. It may be that my own niggardly ideas misled the House. Finding

that the estimates had risen about £500,000 in 1873-74; and that for this year they were still further increased by £175,000, I confess that with my exceedingly stingy and perhaps narrow views, I felt appalled at the bare possibility of having to add anything to this increase." As to the scare, it had not, he repeated, been caused by what he said; but by what occurred afterwards. He could assure the House that for his part, he did not intend to make any heroic efforts to increase the expenditure. "I do not think," he added, "that the circumstances of the times demand such increase. Europe is in a state of profound peace. At the present moment there is no cloud, even as big as a man's hand, on the horizon." * So the ten days' scare passed away like a nine days' wonder. Sir John Hay and other professional alarmists made several efforts to revive the mistrust; but the public response was feeble, and in a few weeks it was universally felt that Mr. Ward Hunt had fallen into the hands of dockyard grumblers, and had been made their mouthpiece to Parliament. Mr. E. J. Reed told the House of Commons in a debate on an alarmist motion of Sir John Hay's, that our armour-clad Navy was, to a great extent, proof against all the guns yet afloat in the other Navies of the world; and in a short time our phantom ships and paper fleet lost their flimsy character even in the eyes of frightened victims of the alarmist illusion, and it was found that we were actually in possession of a Navy stronger than all other Navies put together.

* Hansard, Vol. 218, cols. 1474, 1475.

CHAPTER V.

LEGISLATIVE RESULTS OF THE CHANGE.

THE Parliamentary experience of Englishmen under Lord Beaconsfield's Administration has not only illustrated his dictum that it is always the unexpected that happens; but has proved the converse of it, that the things anticipated do not come to pass. The main interest of the new Session was centred by anticipation on the Budget and the new Licensing Bill; it was actually concentrated on the Primate's measure for the Regulation of Public Worship and Lord Sandon's Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill. The Budget was commonplace, as all the world knew it must be. It was the Liberal Budget watered down to the standard of Conservative finance. The most striking thing in Sir Stafford Northcote's financial statement was his testimony to the correctness of Mr. Gladstone's forecasts, and his rebuke to the candidates and journalists who had ridiculed them. After quoting from Mr. Gladstone's address the statement that, if no great misfortune were to happen, the surplus would exceed rather than fall short of £5,000,000, Sir Stafford Northcote continued—"That statement was, as I remember, received at the time by the country with some incredulity, and was a good deal

criticized by the Press and on the hustings. I myself never ventured in any degree to challenge the calculations upon which I felt sure my right honourable friend the late Prime Minister must have made that statement. I knew he was not a man who would be likely to be deceived in these matters, or to risk his high reputation by making a reckless statement on so grave a subject, and I therefore anticipated that when the time should come for him to make his Financial Statement in the House of Commons, he would be in a position to show that his estimate had either been realized, or that he had been deceived owing to some circumstances which could not then be anticipated. When we acceded to office I was very shortly put in possession by the officers of my Department of the calculations upon which the right honourable gentleman had founded the statement which he made, and I found, as I had expected, that these calculations had been made in the usual manner by the officers of the Revenue with great care and in considerable detail; and I am bound to say that they entirely justified the expectations which the right honourable gentleman had in his mind at the time he penned the address to which I have referred.”* The Chancellor of the Exchequer then stated the figures of the anticipated Revenue in detail, and summed up as the net result, that the Estimate for this year amounts to £77,995,000 against £77,335,657 last year; and as compared with our Expenditure, “for which the Government had taken the Estimates left

* Hansard, Vol. 218, col. 640.

by their predecessors," of £72,503,000, it leaves a surplus of no less than £5,492,000. Nor was this all. "I have not quite done with the wonders I have to lay before the Committee," said Sir Stafford Northcote. There was a yearly income from Interest on Advances which the Comptroller and Auditor-General had shown to come naturally under the head of Revenue. It was not easy to calculate the amount, but it would not be less than £500,000, "and therefore the surplus," added the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "which I have taken at £5,492,000, will, as nearly as possible, or perhaps may fully, reach the extraordinary amount of £6,000,000."*

Here was a million more than Mr. Gladstone had reckoned upon, and it would have made his great scheme for the abolition of the income-tax and the reconstruction of our fiscal system by so much the easier. His successor could only muddle it away. He began by adding a million to the year's outlay in the shape of grants "in aid of Local Taxation." "It is proposed," he said, "in addition to the expenditure of £72,503,000, to take Votes in aid of Local Taxation, £600,000 for Police; for Lunatic Asylums (half the year), £240,000; and in the shape of contributions from Government property, £170,000; making a total of £1,010,000. This will increase the Expenditure to £73,513,000."† The actual remissions of taxation amounted to £4,020,000. Two millions of this came from the sugar duties, which were abolished; the reduction of the income-tax by

* Hansard, Vol. 218, col. 645.

† Idem, col. 676.

one penny in the pound (from three-pence to two-pence) sacrificed £1,840,000, of which only £1,540,000 was remitted in the current year; while the House Duty, the Horse-dealers' License Duty, and the Race-horse Duty, were repealed, at a loss to the revenue of £480,000. The remissions thus made left a surplus of £462,000! The half million from the Miscellaneous Revenue was devoted to the reduction of the National Debt. Thus was the great fiscal opportunity frittered away. All the benefit that the nation as a whole got from the unexampled surplus was the abolition of the sugar duties, and the reduction of the income-tax from three-pence in the pound to two-pence for a couple of years. The grants in aid of local taxation were, of course, popular with the classes on whom that taxation falls; while the selection of the horse-trade for special exemption from half a million of taxation was in reality a concession to a class. Mr. Gladstone, with a prospect of five millions more revenue than he wanted, had proposed to abolish the income-tax as well as the sugar duties; Sir Stafford Northcote, with a surplus taxation of six millions, gave the nation cheap sugar, as his predecessor had promised; but only made a temporary reduction in the income-tax. The income-tax payers have, therefore, only to add up their payments since 1874, and apart from any question of further expenditure they will see how much they have been charged for putting out of office the greatest financier of the time, just as his greatest opportunity had come, and handing over that oppor-

tunity to feebler hands. Mr. Gladstone would have made the policy of the Government fit in with his financial plans ; Sir Stafford Northcote had to accommodate himself to the requirements of colleagues who were intent on everything but economy, and who had been placed in office by a nation that was in the mood to spend.

This Budget, like the other early measures of the Government, was received with more satisfaction by Liberal members inside the House of Commons than by Conservative supporters outside. The farmers were indignant. The representatives of the County Agricultural Associations met at the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and passed a strong resolution, setting forth the "surprise and disappointment" with which they saw "a surplus of £6,000,000 distributed by the Government without any attempt to reduce or repeal the Malt Tax." Mr. Clare Read, who had been made Chief Secretary to the Local Government Board, joined in the disappointment but not in the surprise. He told the farmers that there was no padlock on his lips, and spoke as an unmuzzled candid friend. "Budgets," he said, "are now-a-days made to pass, as razors sold in fairs are said to be made, not to shave, but to sell." Another speaker, Mr. Herman Beddill, said, amid loud cheers of sympathy, that "if the present Government had gone to the country on their Budget of this year—a Budget with a surplus of six millions, and no relief from the Malt Tax—the farmers would not have taken the trouble to go to the ballot-box." The farmers,

however, were soon taught their weakness in the new Parliament. Mr. Joshua Fielden, in faithfulness to the pledge he had given his constituents, brought forward a motion declaring that the Malt Tax should be reduced ; but he was opposed even by Mr. Henley and Colonel Barttelot, and though ten years before 99 votes had been given for a similar proposal to 347 against it, Mr. Fielden mustered only 17 supporters, and he was defeated by a majority of 227. From that time to this the question of the Malt Tax has been treated even in the Chambers of Agriculture with judicious silence.

Mr. Gladstone had stayed in London, and taken part in the Budget debate, expressing his general approval of a scheme, the main outlines of which were a faint reproduction of his own. Mr. Smollett, whose unfortunate inheritance of an illustrious name has turned a commonplace man into a feeble wit, brought forward a motion of censure on the late Government, for the sudden dissolution of the last Parliament. Mr. Smollett, as usual, made a foolish speech, and as soon as he sat down, Mr. Gladstone half rose, but was out of order, as the motion had not been seconded. The Speaker asked who seconded it, but nobody responded. He was asking for the last time, when Mr. Whalley stepped forward from behind the Chair and said, "I beg to second it." "It found me in prison," said the Member for Peterborough, when, an hour later, he explained his support of so ridiculous a motion. Mr. Gladstone made an eloquent vindication of his conduct, admitting that the dissolution

was "externally an abrupt act;" but declaring "Had I known as well as I know now what was to take place, it would not have been upon the 24th of January, nor the 24th of December, nor upon any day in January or December, but at a much earlier period, that my Colleagues and myself would have advised the Crown to dissolve." He concluded by saying, "I accept the responsibility cast on me. I do not evade it. I do not flinch from it. I have made my justification, and I shall retire from the House, while this discussion yet lasts, to wait its decision, and to receive with satisfaction what that decision shall be, reserving at the same time my right to act as circumstances may render necessary."* Mr. Gladstone then left the House; and the motion which could have led to nothing was negatived without a division. The discussion is only memorable because it was the last in which Mr. Gladstone appeared as the leader of the Liberal party. Directly afterwards, he went into the country to seek the repose he had already told his party he greatly needed.

An older Liberal leader stepped to the front in the House of Lords ten days later, with an expression of the apprehension many people felt as to the relations of Germany and France. Earl Russell, in moving for Correspondence with Germany, Austria, Russia and France, relating to the maintenance of peace, showed that he was looking westward for the storm which was afterwards to come from the East. Lord Derby replied with caution, admitting that "in present

* Hansard, Vol. 218, col. 1126.

appearances, there may be ground for apprehension and anxiety," but declaring that "from the general tone and spirit of the communications which reach me from all parts of Europe, so far as immediate appearances go, there is no serious cause for apprehension of any present disturbance of the peace of Europe."* In the next week, the Emperor of Russia came to London to see his newly-married daughter, and met with the most cordial reception. No shadow of coming events was cast on this pleasant visit. The Czar had spent the night of the 12th of May stranded in the Derjava on a sandbank at Flushing; his landing consequently took place at Dover, instead of at Gravesend, where a squadron of ironclads, as well as a fleet of pleasure boats and vast multitudes of people had gone to welcome him. On the next day there was a State banquet at Windsor, and on the 15th the Imperial party came to London and took possession of Buckingham Palace, where the Czar held a grand reception of the Ministers and Diplomatic body. A great popular reception was given to him at the Crystal Palace on Saturday, during which he telegraphed to the Queen at Windsor, and to his wife at St. Petersburg, his satisfaction at his welcome in London. On Monday the Emperor attended a State banquet at the Guildhall, in which he said, in reply to a flattering address by the Corporation, that he hoped the "affectionate home" his daughter had found here would "strengthen the friendly relations now established between Russia and Great Britain, to the

* Hansard, Vol. 218, col. 1568.

mutual advantage of their prosperity and peace." A Concert at the Albert Hall, a State Ball at Buckingham Palace, reviews at Aldershot and Woolwich, and a dinner by the invitation of Lord and Lady Derby at the Foreign Office, completed the round of festivities, and the Emperor left England on Thursday the 21st, well satisfied with a visit in which he had received all possible evidence of the cordiality of the Royal Family, the sympathy of the Government, and the hearty friendship of the people. The Eastern Question existed, but it had not yet begun to make our young men see visions of Russian aggrandizement, nor our old men dream dreams of a rejuvenated Islam under English protection.

While the Emperor of Russia was on his way hither the lobby of the Houses of Parliament saw an unusual sight. On the second Monday in May, the supporters of the new Government had gathered from country parsonages, and from public-houses, to listen to debates in which they were personally interested. On that evening, the Primate's Bill for the Regulation of Public Worship was down for second reading in the Lords, and Mr. Cross's Intoxicating Liquors Bill was for second reading in the House of Commons. As the members passed through the lobby leading to the central hall, they found it lined, on either side, with an eager host, waiting for the summons which should call them to the strangers' gallery, in the Upper or the Lower House. On the left were the publicans, with a few teetotalers among them; on the right was a clerical group, intermixed

with a few clerically disposed laymen. "The two groups looked a little shyly at each other across the passage," said a country paper, "like people who have been acting together in some sudden emergency, and when it is over wake up to the recollection that they have never been introduced to one another." The publicans, however, were still full of hope; the clergy were gloomy and despondent. The one group were expecting that the promises made in the elections would even yet be kept, and that restrictions would be taken off them to a greater extent than Mr. Cross had proposed in introducing his Bill; the other group were only anxious to learn what the Government would say to the scheme of the Archbishops and Bishops, if not to put on new restrictions, at least, to give the parishioners on the one hand, and the Bishops on the other, easier means of enforcing the law. Inside the two Houses were more excited crowds, though the Lords themselves showed but a languid interest in a measure which everybody knew was to be read a second time without a division. The result of the evening's work, as it appeared to these groups of interested and excited on-lookers, was well summed-up in the paper already quoted. "Probably both parties felt when they left that they had not much to thank their friends for. The Government left the relief of the publicans 'in the hands of the House,' and seemed inclined to hand over the Clergy to the Bishops. The clans had gathered, but not to victory; and though, as was right, the clergy had long gone home from the brilliant debate in the

Lords, when the publicans streamed out, weary and depressed, from the gallery of the Commons, the splendid oration in which the Bishop of Peterborough had demanded "a deep, searching, thorough Church Reform," as the condition of its safety, left on the minds of the clergy the conviction which the Commons debate had left on their allies, that the Conservative reaction had not brought them to halcyon days of rest and thankfulness and peace."

Mr. Cross had introduced the Licensing Bill a fortnight before. In doing so he showed an uneasy sense of what was expected of him, and made an elaborate apology for not granting it. He spoke, of course, to a sympathizing audience. The supporters of the Government knew that many of them owed their seats to the great Beer interest, and that among the eager crowd looking down upon them from the strangers' gallery were the representatives of that interest, waiting for its reward. The restrictions which the Act of 1872 imposed on the trade in intoxicating liquors had formed a great element in the Conservative reaction; the supporters of the Government had traded upon the temporary discontent caused by the new regulations, and greatly profited by it, and were now to show the sincerity of their protests against supposed infringements of roystering liberties. The publicans had helped the Government into power, and the Government was now to redeem its pledge to help them in return. Their enthusiasm for the Bible in the late elections had been animated by the prospect of this measure,

and the Conservative reaction had no other motive among them and their adherents than the extensive modification, if not the repeal, of the Act of 1872. Yet the beneficent character of Mr. Bruce's measure was becoming more obvious every month. The irritation felt by gangs of midnight revellers when first they were sent home at twelve o'clock instead of being turned into the streets at one, was fast dying out. Every member of the House of Commons knew how much greater was the quiet of London streets at night; and from every district in the country came the clearest testimonies to the improvement in public manners which had resulted from the changes Mr. Bruce had made. The Licensed Victuallers, however, had a grievance. Mr. Bruce's anxiety to stop the adulteration of beer had induced him to put some very stringent provisions into his Act which read somewhat harshly, but did not work at all. He had, moreover, given power to the police to enter licensed houses, not merely for the purpose of enforcing order as they could under the older law, but to "examine every room and part of such premises, and take an account of all intoxicating liquors found therein." The police used this great power somewhat harshly; and Licensed Victuallers felt that to them alone the inviolability of the Englishman's home, which the London Water Companies have long been allowed to trample under foot, no longer existed at all. The endorsement on the licenses of every conviction which involved a fine of a pound or upwards, and the forfeiture of the

license on three such endorsements, was also regarded by the publicans as an unduly severe penalty. The great election cry, however, had been against restrictions on the hours of opening, and it was with these particularly that the new Government was expected to deal.

Mr. Cross had in this matter to disappoint his friends. He made the most of a proposal to sweep away the adulteration clauses, which he confessed had been a dead letter. He paraded at considerable length a change by which the endorsement of the licenses was henceforth to be left to the discretion of the magistrates; and he magnified to the utmost the "great relief to the trade" which would be given by his "endeavour to wash out that colour—to remove the blot which has been put upon the old law"* by sweeping away the power of entry given to the police. But as to the general operation of the much condemned Act of 1872 he had little else to say than unqualified praise. Just as each of the other Ministers had in his turn to deny all the statements made about the measures of the late Government in the elections, so had Mr. Cross to speak of Mr. Bruce's Act. The publicans, like Balak, had called him in to curse, and he, like Balaam, could only stand up to bless. The hours of opening under the Act of 1872 had been, in London, from five in the morning to twelve at night on weekdays, and on Sundays from one to three in the afternoon and from six to eleven at night—in other places they had been,

* Hansard, Vol. 218, col. 1242.

according to the discretion of the magistrates, from any hour between five and seven in the morning of weekdays, till eleven or any hour between ten and twelve at night; and on Sundays from half-past twelve or one to half-past two or three; and from six till any hour between nine and eleven in the evening. Mr. Cross proposed to sweep away the magisterial discretion, and to make half-past twelve the closing hour in London, half-past eleven in other populous places, and eleven in rural districts. His reply to the clamour raised about suppers after the theatres, was to abolish the exemption made for this purpose in the Act of 1872, by which fifty-four houses in London had been kept open till one o'clock. These concessions, however, were to be made only to the Licensed Victuallers; and to apply only to weekdays; the Sunday hours under the Act of 1872 were not to be touched. The Beer-houses were still to close at the earlier hours, thus establishing what Sir William Harcourt called "an aristocracy of spirits as against a democracy of beer." Mr. Cross concluded his speech by expressing his regret that he had not been able to lay on the table a Consolidation Act, as the statutes on the subject were so innumerable that it would take the whole Session. It was, however, his anxious wish, when the matters now in question were settled, "to bring in a Consolidated Act on the whole subject."

Perhaps it was the bitter experience gained during the debates on this Bill, which small as it was did "take the whole Session," which hindered Mr. Cross

from again naming his wish to consolidate the Licensing Acts. On the second reading of his measure he expressly declared that it was not meant to be anything but an amending Act to the Act of 1872; which, he said, had been passed in a hurry at the end of the Session. He pleaded, further, that so far as even London was concerned, it was in restraint rather than extension of the drinking hours. It kept all houses open till half-past twelve, but it abolished the exemptions by which many houses had kept their customers in the bar till one. In this apologetic spirit the Bill was read a second time, and slowly sifted through Committee. Meanwhile public feeling was greatly roused by the proposed extension of the hours of drinking. Town Councils, Boards of Guardians, benches of borough magistrates, clerical and nonconformist assemblies, and some seventy town meetings, protested against the concession, which even the Licensed Victuallers themselves received with coldness. Lord Aberdare had the satisfaction of witnessing a general uprising of the public conscience in favour of his much abused Act, which remains the basis of our Licensing system. The debates in Committee were continued in the House of Commons till the end of June. One of the most important modifications of the Bill was introduced by Sir William Harcourt, who succeeded in removing the invidious distinction between Beer and Spirit Licenses. The hours of opening were extended in London to half-past twelve; but Mr. Cross explained that this extension was more nominal than real, as the Act of

1872 gave the customers a grace for clearing their glasses after the closing at twelve, whereas the new Bill turned them peremptorily into the street at half-past twelve. The discretion of the magistrates in fixing the hours was partly given back in the form of permitting them to decide what should be populous places and what rural districts. In the former, and in all towns out of London, eleven was fixed as the hour for closing, in place of the magisterial discretion to fix any hour between ten and twelve, given in the Act of 1872; and in rural districts the public-house curfew was fixed at ten. The result was that in many towns, such as Oxford, where the magistrates had fixed half-past eleven, and Abingdon, where they had fixed twelve under Mr. Bruce's Act, the Act of Mr. Cross cut off half an hour and an hour. In rural places, where Mr. Bruce had also allowed the magistrates to fix any time from ten to twelve, Mr. Cross shut up all the public-houses sharp at ten. The Licensed Victuallers had been betrayed in the House of their friends.

The other wing of the Conservative reaction had even less reason to be satisfied with the doings of the new Parliament than the public-house keepers of the towns. There was no hint in the Queen's Speech of what was to prove the chief measure of the Session, probably for the reason that there had been no thought of it in the mind of any of the Ministers. The reception which the Public Worship Regulation Bill met in both Houses of Parliament, took even its authors by surprise. The measure had been introduced

into the House of Lords by the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the 20th of April, in a speech which had fluttered the clerical doves all over the Kingdom. His quotations from ritualist publications, his account of the Confession-boxes which had been erected in the churches, and his readings from the altar cards which contain prayers to be said in a low tone during the celebration of the Communion, "prayers which the clergyman knows that the congregation would condemn, and the whole Church would condemn, if he dared to recite them aloud,"* had created much excitement in the country. The Bill, which was avowedly one for the suppression of these practices, was, in accordance with the vicious precedent set up of late years, submitted to Convocation on the 28th of April, and feebly disapproved by that body. The second reading was moved in the House of Lords by the Archbishop of York in a speech which re-echoed and confirmed all the alarming representations of the other Archbishop. It was opposed by Lord Shaftesbury, who declared that "such a Bill as this propounded to-night will leave all the greater evils as it found them, and we shall have reason to be thankful if it does not make them worse."† The Bishop of Peterborough, who would be the greatest orator in the House of Lords if he could convey the impression that he is thoroughly sincere, made an exciting speech in favour of the Bill, hoping, however, that it would be largely modified in Committee. "We are told," said the Bishop, "that we should

* Hansard, Vol. 218, col. 790.

† Idem, Vol. 219, col. 22.

govern the Church by fatherliness. Now I must be allowed to say that there is something very one-sided in this cry for fatherliness from the Bishops when they meet with no filialness, and I should like to have some reciprocity. When a monition is to be flung back in my face, and I am told that I am 'neither a gentleman nor a Divine,' and that my conversion to Christianity is to be prayed for, I must say, I should like to see a little filialness on the part of those who are demanding this fatherliness. I honestly desire, as far as I can, to be fatherly towards these men; but when I hear this advice given to us I am reminded of the solitary instance in which a ruler attempted to govern in this fatherly fashion, and that his name was Eli, while his sons were Hophni and Phineas."*

The Government gave the Bill a feeble and divided support. The Duke of Richmond spoke hesitatingly in its favour. Lord Salisbury spoke hesitatingly against it. The former wound up his speech by saying, "I believe the great object and desire of all parties is to put an end to the extravagances of one party, and to deal with, perhaps I may say, the shortcomings of the other."† The latter divided the Church into three schools, the Sacramental, the Emotional, and the Philosophical, pleaded for the toleration of all, and foretold that "if you attempt to drive from the Church of England any one of the parties of which it is composed, if you tamper with the spirit of toleration, of which she is the embodiment, you will

* Hansard, Vol. 219, col. 27.

† Idem, col. 65.

produce a convulsion in the Church, and imperil the interests of the State itself.”* The Bill, however, was pushed on, Lord Shaftesbury’s amendment, which substituted a Judge for the Bishop in the trial of cases under it, being adopted, as well as an important change suggested by Lord Cairns, which recast some portions of the measure. The amendment of the Bishop of Peterborough, which would have given the clergyman absolute freedom on seven points of ritual, and which was the most striking suggestion the debates elicited, was withdrawn; and the Bill, which had become the joint work of Lord Cairns, Lord Shaftesbury, and the Archbishops, was sent down to the Commons early in July. It was still the Bill of a private member, and no public indication had yet been given of strong Government support. It was known that Lord Salisbury was strongly opposed to the measure, and he had the sympathy, in the Cabinet, of Mr. Gathorne Hardy. Mr. Disraeli was indifferent. He was ready to take the winning side, whether it proved to be that of vindicating the Protestant character of the English Constitution, or maintaining the tolerant inclusiveness of the English Church. His lieutenants might commit themselves, but he was free, and kept himself so, till his great opponent had made a false move, when the Prime Minister at once took up the game and won the stakes.

The second reading was moved in the House of Commons by Mr. Russell Gurney, on the 9th of July. Mr. Gladstone, who had reappeared in the House

* Hansard, Vol. 219, col. 56.

three days before on the discussion of the Scotch Patronage Bill, being in his place at the head of the Liberal party. Mr. Hall, the new member for Oxford, who had been returned in March, when Mr. Cardwell had gone to the Upper House, moved an amendment, which was seconded by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen. As soon as the Speaker had put the amendment, Mr. Gladstone plunged into the discussion with all the freshness and ardour of his best days. He had left his rural retirement in order to show the House and the country the dangers on which they were rushing. His speech was an eloquent and impassioned appeal on behalf of the clergy. "I take my stand," he said, "on the broad ground, that a certain degree of liberty has been permitted in the congregations of the Church of England, that great diversity exists in different parts of the country, and in different congregations, that various customs have grown up in accordance with the feelings and usages of the people, and whether the practices that have so grown up are or are not in accordance with the law, I say they ought not to be rashly and rudely rooted out." Mr. Gladstone concluded by placing on the table of the House six resolutions, which he thought might form the basis of legislation which should curb the eccentricities of individuals without "proscribing all varieties of opinion and usage among the many thousand congregations of the Church distributed through the land." *

Mr. Gladstone spoke in his most impassioned

* Hansard, Vol. 220, col. 1377.

manner, and Sir William Harcourt, speaking later in the evening, expressed the feeling of the House in saying that they had been under the wand of the great enchanter, and had listened with rapt attention as he had poured forth the wealth of his incomparable eloquence. Sir William Harcourt, however, made a very able, if not altogether conclusive, reply, reasserting the unalterable attachment of the English people to the principles of the Reformation, and declaring it to be needful to vindicate the Protestantism of the English Church. His speech was loudly cheered—by many Liberals because it expressed their views and seemed like an authoritative disclaimer of their great leader's ritualistic tendencies; by still more Tories, because it united with a loud Protestant ring a note of discord between Mr. Gladstone and some of his followers. But the next speaker was Mr. Gathorne Hardy, and he at once showed that if the Bill caused disunion on the benches opposite, it was a symbol of Ministerial division as well. Mr. Hardy began in his usual monotonous voice and headlong style to attack the Bill; but was met with loud interruptions from his own side, and ironical cheers from the Opposition. He had to ask his own friends to give him a hearing, and they reluctantly granted him the privilege. Mr. Leatham, agreeing with Mr. Dillwyn, who had spoken earlier in the evening, spoke against the Bill from the point of view of ecclesiastical Liberalism; but, like Mr. Hardy, was heard with impatience. Mr. Disraeli had to promise to find a day to continue the debate. He suggested

Wednesday, but the House would not hear of giving it a morning sitting on which it could be talked out, and Mr. Disraeli had to promise that on the Monday he would make an announcement. When Monday came, he dexterously pushed Mr. Gladstone's six resolutions to the front, intimated that their real meaning was the separation of Church and State in a ritualistic sense, and said that the Government must take up the challenge, and give every facility to the discussion of the Bill.

On Wednesday, Mr. Disraeli took the unusual course of moving that the Standing Orders respecting sittings on Wednesdays should be suspended till the debate on this Bill was disposed of. The resumed discussion revealed divisions as to the policy of the Bill on both front benches. Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen spoke in its favour; as Lord Sandon did from the Ministerial bench. Mr. Disraeli spoke late in the afternoon as strongly in favour of the Bill as his War Minister had spoken against it. After describing the three parties in the Church, of which Ceremony, Enthusiasm, and Free Speculation were the characteristics, and declaring that the object was not to attack either of these, he said, "I take the primary object of this Bill, whose powers, if it be enacted, will be applied and extended impartially to all subjects of Her Majesty, to be this—to put down Ritualism. The right honourable gentleman, the Member for Greenwich, says he does not know what Ritualism is, but there I think the right honourable gentleman is in an isolated position. That ignorance

is not shared by the House of Commons, or the country. What the House of Commons and the country understand by Ritualism is practices by a portion of the clergy, avowedly symbolic of doctrines which the same clergy are bound in the most solemn manner to refute and repudiate. Therefore, I think there can be no mistake among practical men, as to what is meant when we say that it is our desire to discourage Ritualism."* After indicating that this was what he had intended in his Glasgow speech, when he had talked of rallying on the broad platform of the Reformation, and declaring, "What I do object to is Mass in masquerade,"† Mr. Disraeli took the Bill under the protection of the Government, and, to give Mr. Gladstone an opportunity of raising a debate on his six resolutions, fixed the Committee for the succeeding Friday. The Bill, which a prominent Minister on one side, and the late Prime Minister on the other side, had opposed with an earnestness amounting to passionate zeal, was read a second time without a division.

On the next day, Mr. Gladstone withdrew his resolutions, and on Friday the Government gave a morning sitting for the discussion in Committee, which was resumed in the evening sitting. The Ministers, like the Opposition chiefs, were still divided, Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord John Manners voting differently from their colleagues, and Sir William Harcourt outdoing Mr. Disraeli in Protestant zeal. The ex-Solicitor General transferred his allegiance

* Hansard, Vol. 221, col. 78.

† Idem, col. 80.

for the nonce from the late Prime Minister to his successor. Mr. Holt carried a motion which would have greatly strengthened the Bill, by giving an appeal to complainants, from a Bishop who refused to act, to the Archbishop. Mr. Gladstone moved to rescind this addition, and showed from the Canonists that it was inconsistent with the relations between Metropolitans and their Suffragans; Sir William Harcourt replied, that to quote the Canonists was enough to make the bones of Lord Coke turn in his grave. Mr. Gladstone's amendment was defeated in the Commons; but the Lords adopted it, and Mr. Holt's clause was struck out. Lord Salisbury urged this course in a characteristic speech, which showed the Ministerial differences to be even greater than those of the Opposition leaders. "Much has been said of the majority in another place, and of the peril in which the Bill would be if the clause under discussion is rejected. There is a great deal of that kind of bluster when any particular course has been taken in the other House of Parliament."* So spoke Lord Salisbury, and "utterly repudiated the bugbear of a majority in the House of Commons." When the Bill went back to that House, Sir William Harcourt, speaking of Mr. Disraeli as "a leader proud of the House of Commons, and of whom the House of Commons is proud," and of Lord Salisbury's "rash and rancorous tongue," urged the Prime Minister to go forward in his anti-Ritualistic legislation. "This Bill," said Sir William Harcourt, "will not restore

* Hansard, Vol. 221, col. 1253.

the principles of the Reformation in the English Church. This Bill will not put down Ritualism; it is only the beginning of the work. The right honourable gentleman has put his hand to the plough, and he cannot turn back. In my opinion, this is one of the occasions which determine the fate of Ministries and the reputation of Statesmen. . . . I am firmly convinced that upon the working of this Bill, or upon those measures which must inevitably succeed it, will depend the future fate of the Church.”* Mr. Disraeli made no response to this appeal to go on. He merely urged the majority to accept the amendments of the Lords. “Let us not for a moment be diverted from the course which we think, as wise and grave men, we ought to follow, by any allusions to the spirit of any speech which may have been made in the course of the debates in the other House of Parliament. My noble friend who has been referred to by the honourable and learned gentleman who has just addressed us with so much ability, was long a member of this House, and is well known to many members even of this Parliament. He is not a man who measures his phrases. He is one who is a great master of jibes and flouts and jeers; but I do not suppose there is any one who is prejudiced against a member of Parliament on account of such qualifications. My noble friend knows the House of Commons well, and he is not perhaps superior to the consideration, that by making a speech of that kind, and taunting respectable men like ourselves with being

* Hansard, Vol. 221, col. 1353.

a blustering majority, he probably might stimulate the *amour propre* of some individuals to take the course which he wants, and to defeat the Bill. Now, I hope we shall not fall into that trap. I hope we shall show my noble friend that we remember some of his manœuvres when he was a simple member of this House, and that we are not to be taunted into taking a very indiscreet step, a step ruinous to all our own wishes and expectations, merely to show that we resent the contemptuous phrases of one of my colleagues. I trust, therefore, that the House will consider this question, not with reference to the elements of the majority of the House of Lords, nor with reference to some expressions in a speech which may have had the calculated intention of inducing members of this House to give a rash vote, a vote fatal to their own wishes, but that, on the contrary, they will keep before them the point at issue.”* As Mr. Disraeli had thus replied to his colleague, so Mr. Gladstone replied to his. He said the lawyer, even the Cambridge Professor of Law, had been taken by surprise on the night of the former debate; complimented him on the “rapidly acquired erudition,” of his speech that evening; and said that the renewal of the controversy would not be profitable “to the party to which, I believe, we both belong.”†

In a later discussion, in the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury rebuked the complete misrepresentation of his words, by which he had been made to speak of the blustering majority in the Lower House. He had

* Hansard, Vol. 221, cols. 1358, 1359.

† Idem, col. 1363.

merely spoken of the bluster made in the House of Lords about the large majority by which the Bill had been carried in the Commons. The Bill, which had been read a third time on the 3rd, finally passed on the 5th of August, by a resolution of the Commons not to insist on their own amendments, and to accept those of the Lords. It was to come into operation in July, 1875. But the storm it had created had meanwhile died away ; the majority soon became intent on other things ; the Minister who had put his hand to the plough, and was not to look back, turned aside to more congenial work ; the measures which were inevitably to follow it were never heard of, and the Act remains, not indeed a dead letter, but, when compared with the large designs of those who passed it, and the agitation and division it caused in political parties and in the Church itself, it must be pronounced to be the most pretentious and preposterous legislative failure of modern times.

CHAPTER VI.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES.

THE Government showed in this first Session a curious indifference to the outline of work which they had sketched in the Queen's Speech. The Intoxicating Liquors Act, which the *Times* described as only a feeble relic of the Bill the Government had laid on the table of the House of Commons; a legal measure relating to Land Rights and Transfer in Scotland, and two little offshoots of the Land Bill, were the sole results which remained in August of the promise put forward in March. The Lord Chancellor very early in the Session introduced three Bills, one for further limiting suits and actions as to real property, another to promote the transfer of land, and a third to facilitate transactions between vendor and purchaser. They were received with a chorus of satisfaction by the Law Lords, and all three were passed by the Upper House. Only the two minor Bills, however, became law; the chief measure, the Land Transfer Bill, being dropped in the Commons. The Judicature Bills met the same fate; and so inconvenient was the delay thus caused, that a hurried Act had to be passed, postponing for a year the operation

of Lord Selborne's great reforming measure. The promised Bill on Friendly Societies was read a second time in the House of Commons and then dropped. The Royal Commission on the Master and Servant Act failed to report in time for anything to be done. On the other hand, several measures, besides the Primate's Bill, which had not been named in the Queen's Speech, were passed. Mr. Sclater-Booth took up Mr. Stansfeld's Rating Bill, and the Lords who had rejected it when a Liberal Government sent it up to them, passed it on the first asking of a Conservative administration. Mr. Cross took a similar advantage of Mr. Mundella. Mr. Mundella had had a Bill amending and extending the Factory Acts before the former House. It had been postponed in 1873, to await the report of a Government inquiry. Reintroduced in the new Parliament, it had been read a second time on the 11th of June, by a majority of 216 in a large House. Mr. Cross then took the matter out of Mr. Mundella's hands, and passed the Bill with the slight modification that whereas Mr. Mundella had proposed to make the working hours 54 a week, Mr. Cross made them $56\frac{1}{2}$, the last half hour on Saturday to be employed in cleaning machinery.

The most important Government Bills were not foreshadowed by the Queen's Speech. The Duke of Richmond introduced the Bill for the Abolition of Patronage in the Scotch Established Church at the middle of May, in a speech in which he avowed that its object was "to extend and perpetuate that

Church.” The Bill took away the appointment of ministers from the patrons, and thus remedied the great grievance, in their protest against which Dr. Chalmers and his supporters had seceded from the Establishment and set up the Free Church thirty years before. It was a Liberal measure which had become a reactionary scheme by being brought into the world a generation behind its time. It transformed the Established Church of Scotland into an Established Sect, by putting the appointment of the parish ministers into the hands of the communicants at the parish kirk, and not into those of the whole body of the parishioners. The Bill passed the Lords with a sort of acclamation, in which the Duke of Argyll, who, in Mr. Leatham’s words, though “not the father of the Bill, exhibited a vivacity of affection for it which would do honour to any parent,” played the loudest part. Lord Selkirk, Lord Dalhousie, and Lord Lauderdale spoke against it, but did not venture to divide. In the Commons, where the Lord Advocate moved the second reading three days before the Public Worship Regulation Bill reached that stage, Mr. Baxter met it with a motion for further inquiry. The debate was signalized by the reappearance of Mr. Gladstone, who was received with ringing cheers from the Liberals as soon as he was seen rising in his old place at their head. His speech, which began with an expression of regret that he should have to mingle in another ecclesiastical controversy, was a strong protest against the Bill. “The Lord Advocate says his intention is to

strengthen the Church," said Mr. Gladstone. "But how? Why, by weakening the other religious bodies, not by an honourable and straightforward offer to them, accompanied by a frank confession of offence, in order to reunite that which in former years was ruthlessly and unhappily torn asunder, but by investing the present Established Church with such wealth and such unbounded liberty with respect to the interference of the civil courts, that you will confer such a condition of popular privilege on the laymen of the Established Church, that laymen of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches will be tempted to come back into the Established Church, and to leave their ministers to look out for themselves or to starve."* This purpose was in no way disavowed by the supporters of the Bill, which was passed by large majorities, in which many Liberal members voted. The scheme, however, has utterly failed. The laymen have been more faithful to their ministers than the Government hoped. The noble protest by which five hundred men threw up their livings, and went forth to face obscurity and poverty for what they called "the crown rights of Christ" could not have the ignominious ending the Duke of Richmond proposed for it. The story of that secession is admirably told in Mr. McCarthy's "History of Our Own Times." It is one of the noblest and most moving passages in modern ecclesiastical history. The five hundred who then went out have grown to nine hundred; and the base scheme by which the

* Hansard, Vol. 220, col. 1122.

evil which drove them out was to be remedied without any reparation being offered to them or to their successors, or any provision made for their return to the Church of their fathers, has been broken to pieces by the fidelity their example has inspired. "The result," says the *Quarterly Review*, "has in one respect grievously disappointed the movers. Their specious plan of comprehension has failed."* During the debates on this measure, Mr. Disraeli taunted Mr. Gladstone with the expression of a hope that we should not see inscribed upon his tombstone the destruction of another Church. It will be written in Mr. Disraeli's memoirs, that in the first Session of his last administration, he and his Ministry and Parliament of Repose passed an Act to save the Scottish Church Establishment, which made the disestablishment of that Church an immediate question of the hour.

Up to this period of the Session nothing had been more striking than the complete disintegration of the Liberal party, unless it were the ecclesiastical differences in the Ministry and among its supporters. Party leadership seemed to be in abeyance, and party lines to be obliterated. There had been nothing which the Liberals, as a party, cared to oppose, or which aroused the party spirit of the Ministerialists in its support. Mr. Trevelyan had introduced his motion for Household Suffrage in Counties on the 13th of May, and the debate, in which Mr. Burt made

* *Quarterly Review*, July, 1879, p. 285, in article "Why is Scotland Radical?"

an excellent maiden speech in support of the motion, and Mr. Forster led the Liberal party, in almost unbroken phalanx to pledge itself to the extension, was closed by a strong anti-Reform speech by Mr. Disraeli. The motion was negatived by 287 to 173. Later on, Mr. Butt raised a great debate on Home Rule, on a motion for a Committee of the whole House to consider the Parliamentary relations of England and Ireland. A few English and Scotch members thought the question might legitimately be considered in this form, and voted for it, among them being Mr. Burt, Mr. J. K. Cross, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Hamond, Mr. E. Jenkins, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and Mr. Serjeant Simon. The motion was, however, defeated by 458 votes to 61. A Bill of Lord Salisbury's, which he described as "a minute legislative change," though associated with considerable questions of policy, was much debated in the Lords. The India Councils Bill had for its object the addition to the Council of the Governor-General in India of one member possessing special qualifications as Surveyor of Public Works. It was eventually carried; but the discussion was memorable for an explanation of Lord Salisbury's, in which he clearly indicated the prevailing temper of the time. Lord Sandhurst had complained that the Bill was got through the Lords in an unusual fashion, and Lord Salisbury replied, that as it had been twenty-four days before the House, there had been no unusual speed. He continued, "it is no easy matter to get an India Bill discussed in a full House. If you put it down

first on the Notice Paper, nobody comes down ; if you put it last, everybody goes away. I put this Bill in a place which I thought gave it the best chance of being discussed—between two ecclesiastical Bills. The evening began with the Church Patronage (Scotland) Bill, and ended with the Public Worship Regulation Bill of the bishops. I trusted to the first to bring down a House, and to the last to keep it here.”* Lords and Commons were both alike. It seemed as though the country had suddenly emerged into an era of ecclesiastical controversy and change.

Perhaps it was the prevalence of this ecclesiastical temper which induced the Government to propose the sole reactionary measure of the year ; while it was undoubtedly the fate of that Bill which checked their ecclesiastical zeal. Lord Sandon, the Conservative successor of Mr. Forster in the Vice-Presidency of the Committee of Council on Education, emerged into sudden notice about the middle of July, as the champion of the Church of England against invading Dissent. Mr. Forster’s Endowed Schools Act of 1869 had set up an Endowed Schools Commission for three years, with power to the Crown to extend it to four. The extension had been granted, and a further year had been given the Commissioners by an Act passed in 1873. They had not done well. They set to work in a cumbersome and unpractical fashion, and when they were assailed, were found to have few friends besides the occupants of the front opposition bench. It was known, before the Session

* Hansard, Vol. 220, col. 295.

began, that they must be again dealt with before Parliament rose; but not a hint was given in the Queen's Speech; and it was only late at night on the 2nd of July, when members were crowding out of the House after the Home Rule division, that Lord Sandon moved for leave to bring in the Bill. He gave no hint of what the measure would be, and though the Act of 1869 had made the Grammar schools national, no one dreamed that a Government which was living on Liberal legacies would propose to restore their sectarian character. Yet it might have been expected. It was quite certain that Lord Salisbury would have a hand in drafting the Bill, and he had been the chief opponent of all the Liberal schemes of the three Commissioners. He could fairly ask, and his colleagues could hardly refuse to grant, the use of the opportunity to take back the educational spoils which the victorious Liberalism of 1868 had plucked from the bigotry of three hundred years. Hitherto, Conservatism had got nothing out of the Conservative reaction; and, as a Liberal minority without a leader, and divided against itself, was not likely to be very watchful in the dog-days, there was every encouragement to an adventurous Toryism to put forth its hand, and, in the last days of the Session, snatch some small advantage for its clerical supporters and itself. The Bill did this. It restored clerical ascendancy in the schools, as well as the old rules about attendance at church, and it was doubtful whether it did not set up again the rule established by the Ilminster decision, that no Dissenter

could even be a Trustee of an Endowed Grammar School of old foundation. As soon as the Bill was printed, the *Daily News* raised an alarm, and by the time the second reading was moved, there was the general expectation and determination of vigorous resistance.

It was the middle of July when Lord Sandon moved the second reading, which he did in a fighting speech. Had Lord Salisbury himself explained the intention of the Bill, he could not have done so in language more defiant and outspoken. The proposal to supersede the existing Commissioners, and put the Charity Commissioners in their place, was in accordance with the suggestions of the Schools Inquiry Report of 1866, and was explained and defended with Lord Sandon's usual suavity; but towards the end of his speech his voice took another tone, and his words another spirit. "The late Government," he said, "disregarded the wishes of the Founders as much as they dared; on this side we respect the wishes of the Founders as much as we can consistently with the requirements of modern society. Honourable gentlemen opposite have ridden roughshod over the traditions and feelings of localities; it is the business of Her Majesty's Government to consult both those traditions and feelings, and to draw the country with them, instead of setting it against them."* In making provision for religious, that is, Church of England teaching in the Endowed Schools, the Government was, he said, "acting in accordance

* Hansard, Vol. 220, col. 1643.

with the feelings widely expressed at the late General Election, for I believe the verdict of the country was as much against the late Government upon this subject as it was on others." Alluding to the relations between the Church and the Dissenters, he said, "If they are found fighting against churchmen, they cannot expect from us a brother's treatment. As long as human nature remains what it is, it is utterly impossible that when the guns are actually pointed against the fortress, its defenders should come forward and make a present of their best positions to the enemy."*

This speech was quite in harmony with the spirit of the Bill, which was described by Mr. Gladstone as one for undoing part of the work of the last Parliament. Lord Sandon saw opposite him, while he was delivering it, the crowded benches of a re-united Opposition, and he flung the sentences at them with an air of defiance and contempt which made it clear that, though the speech was Lord Sandon's, the spirit which inspired it was Lord Salisbury's. Mr. Forster, whose real or supposed shortcomings in educational liberalism had caused much discontent in the country, and greatly contributed to Liberal lukewarmness at the elections, was greeted with loud cheers as he rose to move an amendment. He asked with great force where the new policy was to end, and pointed out that the arguments which justified the exclusion of Dissenters from the Grammar Schools would require the repeal of the University Tests Act. He made

* Hansard, Vol. 220, cols. 1643, 1644.

the House and the country feel that his own moderate course, as Education Minister, had given him a very strong position from which to resist this reactionary step. As in regard to elementary education, he said he had, in the interest of religion and religious education, striven to get fair play for the Church of England; so, for the same reason, and as much in the interest of religious education, he protested against this attempt to retain or get back for the Church exclusive privileges in and control over schools which belonged to all Her Majesty's subjects. In the debate which followed, the purpose of the Bill came still more clearly out. Mr. Beresford Hope said the main principle at stake was protection for fixity of belief. Mr. Dillwyn complained that the speeches of its supporters had about them "the true Conservative ring," and the Solicitor-General replied that it was exactly that true Conservative ring he had admired in Lord Sandon's speech. Mr. Cross, in replying to Mr. Kay-Shuttleworth and Mr. Playfair, tried to be moderate, but confessed that "what the Government has done is not to engraft a new principle, but to extend the old one, that endowments left for Church of England Schools should not be applied to other purposes."* Mr. Gladstone followed him, taking up and re-stating the arguments of earlier speakers on the same side, but adding to them a constitutional and historical appeal. "The history of our country for the last forty or fifty years," he said, "presents to us, as a general rule, this remarkable picture. The

* Hansard, Vol. 220, col. 1698.

initiative of policy in almost every instance—I do not know of even one exception—both administrative and legislative, was supplied by the Liberal party, and subsequently adopted in prudence and in honesty by the party which is called Conservative.” Mr. Cross had apologized for the Bill as one of the legacies of the late Liberal Government. “Yes,” replied Mr. Gladstone, “there have been a great many legacies left by the Liberal Government. The policy which at present governs every department of the State is part of the legacy left by the Liberal Government. The right honourable gentleman and his party ought to be more grateful for those Liberal legacies, on which they will have to live as a ministry. What are we now asked to do? The majority of this Parliament is invited to undo the work of their predecessors in office, in defiance of precedents which I should weary the House by enumerating, so great are their number and uniformity.”* Mr. Gladstone concluded by an earnest appeal against representing the Church of England as struggling at every instant to keep her hands on pounds, shillings and pence, whatever else may be in danger; and by re-stating the great principle, that “whatever has once taken its place in the statute book, or has been adopted in our administration, no feelings of party, and no vicissitudes of majorities or minorities are allowed to draw the nation into the dangerous, though they may be seductive, paths of retrogression.”† Mr. Gathorne Hardy replied, and on a

* Hansard, Vol. 220, cols. 1707, 1708. † Idem, Vol. 220, col. 1709.

division the second reading was carried by 291 votes to 209.

In the succeeding week, two more days were occupied in a debate on an amendment by Mr. Fawcett to the motion to go into Committee on the Bill. The amendment declared it to be "inexpedient to sanction a measure which will allow any one religious body to control schools that were thrown open to the whole nation by the policy of the last Parliament." The debate showed the Opposition to be united as one man against the Bill. There had been a large conference of Liberals at the Westminster Palace Hotel in the afternoon, and the country was evidently roused. Lord Sandon was conciliatory. He offered to bring in a new clause, empowering the Commissioners to permit one-third of the members of a governing body to be Dissenters; but the Liberals rejected the concession. He even tried to show that he would work the other obnoxious clauses in a liberal sense. The debate lasted two days. Mr. Disraeli, speaking at the end of the second day, taunted the Opposition on their union. If the measure had reorganized the Liberal party, there would now be a chance of carrying on the business of the country with credit. The first effect of the reorganization had been, he said, that since it had taken place there had been several divisions in which the Government majority was exactly doubled. The division which immediately followed this boast showed a reduction of the Government majority to 69. On Wednesday, the 22nd, the morning sitting, after an

obstructive motion of Mr. Fawcett's had been defeated by a majority of only 20, was spent in discussing the first clause. As the afternoon wore on, the Ministerial benches became densely crowded, and Liberal speakers were met with fierce shouts of 'vide, 'vide, which drowned their voices. Mr. Mundella called the Chairman's attention to Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, and asked whether any member connected with the Ministry was warranted in skulking behind the Chair and adding his voice to the confusion and noise; but Mr. Raikes rebuked Mr. Mundella, and the storm raged on. It grew louder and louder as Mr. Melly, who spoke last, persisted, while the hand of the clock approached a quarter to six, but died away in a Liberal cheer when the debate stood adjourned as the quarter was reached. The sitting was the noisiest and most excited the new Parliament had seen. In the evening, Mr. Disraeli went to the Mansion House, where he was apologetic and humble. "You must look on Her Majesty's Government," he said, "as a body of men who have been called on unexpectedly to assume the reins of power, and who, finding themselves in that position, have dealt as practical men, as well as they could, with the urgent forces and business of the hour. We are now on the eve of a period when we shall have more time and more leisure to consider the condition of affairs, and to prepare such measures as we think are necessary and adequate."

Next day, Committee on the Bill was resumed, when the fourth clause, the one which restored the sec-

tarian character of the schools, was warmly debated, and several Conservative members, Mr. Russell Gurney among them, expressed dissatisfaction with it. Late at night progress was reported on this clause, and next day (July 24) the House met at two. Meanwhile, rumours of concession had got afloat, and a crowded House had assembled at the morning sitting. As soon as questions were over, Mr. Disraeli rose to make a statement on the condition of public business. After stating what Bills were to be dropped, he came to the Endowed Schools Bill. He spoke of the protracted debates, of what he thought misconceptions as to the disputed clauses, and then proceeded, "I honestly confess—although it may be an argument to prove my own incapacity for the position I occupy—that as to those clauses, although I have given them many anxious and perplexed moments of consideration, they have much perplexed me. I have not been able to obtain that mastery over them that I should wish to have. But the House having sanctioned the appointment of a new Commission, and having sanctioned it in a manner which entirely justifies the policy of Her Majesty's Government, Her Majesty's Government deem it advisable to postpone to another Session the consideration of the Amendments which the Government may desire to introduce with respect to the existing law."* This announcement was received with silence by the Ministerialists, and with ringing cheers by the triumphant Opposition. Mr. Gladstone delivered an

* Hansard, Vol. 221, col. 627.

eloquent funeral oration over the defunct Commission, breaking, however, like Handel's glorious March in "Saul," into notes of triumph over the defeated reactionists, who loudly expressed their discontent with the Government policy. The pledge to reintroduce the clauses next year was made to smooth the way for the concession in the Cabinet itself, and was never meant to be redeemed. The internal divisions in the Ministry, however, made themselves apparent. Mr. Disraeli had blamed the "adepts and experts" who had put the intentions of the Cabinet into the language of Acts of Parliament. The apology was preposterous. Sir Henry Thring naturally resented it, and the Lord Chancellor apologized for it in the House of Lords. Mr. Disraeli was afterwards obliged to explain that the Bill was that of the whole Cabinet; had been adopted and prepared by the Ministry as a whole, and had been given to Lord Sandon to introduce, from the Prime Minister's wish to give the rising statesmen of the day a chance. When the Bill went to the Lords, Lord Salisbury, who, on the night before the surrender had witnessed the closing scenes of the conflict from the Peers' gallery, was judiciously silent, and nothing more has ever been heard of the threats to reoccupy the dismantled fortress of educational exclusiveness with which Lord Sandon had gratified the Hubbards, and Talbots, and Beresford Hopes, and other bigots of his party, and had drawn down humiliation, if not actual defeat, on the Government and on himself.

The Session closed on the 8th of August with a Queen's Speech which contained the most meagre list of Government measures of any Speech of modern times. In this respect the first Session of the new Parliament foreshadowed all the rest. It showed itself not to be a working Parliament. The only successful measures of the Government were those which came to it among the Liberal legacies on which it lived. The Queen's Speech did not mention the Endowed Schools Act. It named only the Factory Act, the Scotch Patronage Act, the Public Worship Regulation Act, the two small legal changes associated with the abandoned Land Transfer Bill, and a measure "for carrying forward Sanitary Legislation in the United Kingdom." The Liberal party was well content. It had defeated the only reactionary schemes which had been brought forward, and its orators could fairly boast during the recess that though the Liberal party had been turned out of office it was still in power. Its measures had been carried. The new Ministers had themselves vindicated its policy. Mr. Disraeli had seemed determined to show that the change had been one not of measures but of men. "He has given us a new Conservatism," said the Liberal *Observer*. "The policy," continued the old Liberal organ, "which consents to the improvements of the past and only deprecates the changes of the future, which looks forward with the Liberal multitude but only goes forward with it when some irresistible necessity compels, is Mr. Disraeli's invention." The *Edinburgh Review* said of

him: "He is more likely to entrap his Tories into sudden Radicalism than to lead them quietly along the paths of Whig moderation." All this was true, as far as the political temper of the Prime Minister was concerned. Sir Charles Dilke's summary of the first six months of the new administration was nevertheless as just as it was shrewd. "The Government," he said, "had perplexed the publicans, persecuted the parsons, disgusted the Dissenters, and annexed the Cannibal islands."

When Mr. Disraeli went to the usual Guildhall banquet on the 9th of November, he was in a sanguine mood. He boasted of the Conservatism of the working men, and gave as one reason for their Conservatism, "They are not afraid of political arrests or domiciliary visits." This was regarded as an allusion to the arrest of Count Arnim and the domiciliary visits to his dwelling with which Europe was ringing. Mr. Disraeli boasted of the province added to the Colonial Empire of England, by the annexation of the Fiji islands, and declared, "We are resolved by every means in our power to consolidate and confirm that Empire." One forecast was particularly unfortunate. Many a working man had remarked to his neighbour, when the Conservative successes were reported in February, "Now for bad times." The bad times had begun in the spring; but looking before and after in November, Mr. Disraeli told his hearers that the prophecies of reaction after the great prosperity had not been realized, and continued, "I may also add, and I do so on the highest authority, that

there is no doubt a considerable revival of trade and a great promise of increase in our commercial transactions." The revival has been promised in similar language every year since, but has never come. There was hope of it at the time Mr. Disraeli spoke, for no glimpse of his spirited foreign policy had then appeared. His foreign policy seemed, indeed, to be everything but spirited. A few days after the speech the world was astonished to see in the *Times* a statement that the Prime Minister had not intended to refer to Berlin, or to make any reflections on the Government of Germany, in his boast of our freedom from domiciliary visits. Our candid friend, M. John Lemoinne, writing on this note in the *Journal des Débats*, called it "the very humble excuse from the First Minister of England to the First Minister of Prussia." "The classic land of liberty has in its turn been invaded," said our French critic, "the Prime Minister of England can no longer speak without incurring and submitting to censure from Berlin." The sting of the taunt was in its truth. Mr. Disraeli's words had no meaning except as they implied a contrast between British freedom and German subjection. A denial in such a case was an apology. All the world knew that it was the thought of what was happening at Berlin which suggested the Minister's words and inspired the cheers with which his audience greeted them, and M. John Lemoinne said what all Europe thought as they saw the English Prime Minister thus eating his words.

The Queen's Speech contained a well-merited recognition of the strenuous exertions of Lord Northbrook in combating the Indian famine, and a statement that a delegate had been sent to the Conference at Brussels on the means of mitigating the severities of war. The attention of Parliament had been occupied during the Session with Indian and Colonial matters rather than with foreign affairs. The whole world looked tranquil as Mr. Disraeli surveyed it from the Lord Mayor's table in the Guildhall. He had already forgotten a passage in his own election address, which may be repeated with double emphasis in the addresses of his opponents at the next general election. He had told the electors of Buckinghamshire with respect to the Ashantee war, that "when our honour is vindicated, it will be the duty of Parliament to inquire by what means we were led into a costly and destructive contest which neither Parliament nor the country have ever sanctioned, and of the necessity or justice of which, in its origin, they have not been made aware." No such inquiry was held, nor even proposed by the Government. Mr. Hanbury raised a debate on the subject, but the members of the Government, instead of impugning the policy of their predecessors, vindicated and justified it. The war had cost less than a million; its triumphant success was another of those Liberal legacies which gilded the early days of the new Ministry, and though, as Sir Wilfrid Lawson said, it had given us nothing but a few umbrellas and a Treaty, the Queen's Speech at

least congratulated the nation that the treaty had been kept.

There was less reason for congratulation in the general condition of the country during the year. The whole duration of the Session was covered by a movement outside the political sphere that may yet develop considerable political results. The strike of farm labourers in East Suffolk for an advance of a shilling a week in their wages came at a bad time. The fall of wages had already begun, and colliers and other mining workmen were reluctantly conceding reductions of ten, fifteen, and twenty per cent. in the payments they had been receiving in 1873. At the Aston Hall Colliery the Union men had struck against some non-unionists; and had been addressed by Mr. Gladstone in the vestry hall at Hawarden with a persuasiveness which induced them to withdraw the strike as against their non-union colleagues. This circumstance contrasted strongly with the conduct of the Lincolnshire and the Suffolk farmers, who replied to the Union demand for a shilling more wages by resolving not to employ Union men. The Bishop of Manchester expressed a very general feeling in asking, with respect to this resolution, "Are the farmers mad?" They locked out 2,400 men, and the Suffolk men, when all efforts at compromise had failed, appealed for public sympathy, and did not appeal in vain. A pilgrimage was undertaken in July: sixty or seventy of the labourers setting out to parade the streets of Cambridge, Bedford, Northampton, the towns in the Black Country, Birmingham, and, lastly, Halifax.

Meanwhile, the whole country had been looking on with painful interest. Successive attempts at compromise were made by Mr. Mundella, by Lord Waveney, by the Speaker, and by the men's Unions ; but all were rejected by the farmers. Mr. S. Morley and Mr. George Dixon succeeded in effecting a compromise in Lincolnshire ; but the Suffolk battle was fought out to the end. The end, however, was an unacknowledged compromise. Nearly half the locked-out men went back at the old wages, but kept their Union tickets. Of the rest, some hundreds migrated, some hundreds more emigrated to the labour paradise of New Zealand, and a considerable number came on the parishes. A hot summer and a splendid harvest compensated the farmers for their losses and helped to frustrate the men. The struggle had one political result. Just as it was over, the death of Lord George Manners caused a vacancy in Cambridgeshire, and the party leaders named Mr. F. S. Powell as a candidate. But the farmers would none of him. They took up Mr. Hunter Rodwell, who had earned their favour by taking the farmers' side in the lock-out dispute. Mr. Powell withdrew, and Mr. Rodwell walked over. He was sent to Parliament as the farmer's advocate ; he has sat there ever since as the landlord's friend.

The autumn brought the other wing of the ecclesiastical storm which had raged during the Session. There is no need to tell the story of the discussion which raged over Mr. Gladstone's reply in the *Contemporary Review* to the question, "What is Ritualism?"

or his subsequent pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees. The debate had no political results. The interest in it was undoubtedly greatly quickened by the pilgrimage of four hundred English Roman Catholics to the shrine of St. Edmund of Abingdon, at Pontigny; and by the conversion to Roman Catholicism of the Marquis of Ripon. This last event caused a very painful feeling. The Radical Viscount Goderich, who, twenty years before, had sat for Huddersfield, and then for the West Riding; who, as Earl de Grey in the House of Lords, had sat on the front Liberal bench for fifteen years; who had occupied the position under Mr. Gladstone's Government, which justified the Duke of Richmond in saying under Mr. Disraeli, "I am Education Minister,"—was one of the last men the public could expect to go over to Rome. It is quite true, as Mr. Gladstone said, that the severance of a few Lords of the soil from the people who cultivate it can be borne; but Lord Ripon's secession was, at least, a nine days' wonder. It has, happily, involved no breach in his cordial relations with the Liberal party and its leaders.

Just at this time the name of Langaibalele became unfortunately prominent in the newspapers; but nobody knew what germs of future disaster the events associated with the name contained. This Zulu chief had been suspected of an intention to excite insurrection in Natal, and the Natal Government, without waiting to ascertain whether the suspicion was true, attacked his territory, dispersed the flocks and herds, and burned the villages of a quiet pastoral people,

took the chief himself a prisoner, and sentenced him to transportation for life. The Colonial Office at once sent word to the Natal Government that the sentence was utterly illegal; but no notice was taken of the despatch, and the sentence was carried out against the disregarded protest of the authorities at home. Here was the precedent on which Sir Bartle Frere afterwards carried out his own high-handed aggression. Cetewayo, too, remembered Langalibalele, and could not trust any longer to English justice. The public would never have known how unjustly Langalibalele had been treated, nor how humbly the Colonial Office had taken its snubbing from the Natal Government, had not Bishop Colenso come home to plead the cause of the oppressed chief with a people who hate oppression, but too often allow it to be inflicted in their name. The whirlwind that has been reaped in Sir Bartle Frere's blundering precipitancy and Lord Chelmsford's stumbling incapacity, was sown as wind when the Natal Government's high-handed neglect of the protest against Langalibalele's unjust condemnation was tamely submitted to by the Colonial Office. It is a new policy for the Home Government when a Colonial administrator smites it on the one cheek, to turn to him or his successors the other also. The Colonial Office under the present administration is the meek department of the English Government. Perhaps it is so because this meekness encourages aggression, and the Government hopes in this way to inherit the earth.

When the year ended, the Naval departments

were busy preparing for the new Arctic Expedition. Mr. Disraeli had announced in November, in a letter to Sir Henry Rawlinson, that the Government had yielded to the representations of the Geographical Society, and would send out a new expedition, to open the way to the Pole. The announcement was cordially received by the public. Very few voices were raised against such a useless expenditure of the public money, and nobody knew, and hardly anybody seemed to suspect, that the Government were preparing for themselves and for the country only another failure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CRUCIAL SESSION.

THE year 1875 opened badly for the Liberal party. Not only had their epponents found them rashly plunging into the stream of a General Election, and, in accordance with precedent, run away with their clothes ; but their great leader had left them, as some of them suspected, in disgust or dudgeon. It is clear, however, that Mr. Gladstone's retirement was due, not to ruffled temper or disappointment, but to the conviction that his work as leader was done, and to a natural desire for rest. He might well have asked, with Tennyson's Lotos-eaters, what profit there was in ever climbing up the climbing wave of Conservative reaction ; but his real feeling was, that the state of public affairs offered him, even forced upon him, the opportunity of necessary repose. He evidently contemplated final withdrawal from the Liberal leadership. In a letter to Lord Granville, dated the 13th of January, 1875, he announced his complete determination to retire, after forty-two years of a laborious public life. " This retirement," he added, " is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life." This letter was completely misunderstood. It referred solely

to the leadership. Mr. Gladstone did not hint at retirement from public life. He probably saw before him the opportunity of educating and informing public opinion, and desired to be free from official responsibilities and entanglements in the expression of his views on public affairs.

The question of the leadership in the House of Commons was a difficult one to settle. Mr. Gladstone's unquestioned supremacy had left too wide a gap between the first and second places in the front rank to be easily passed. Mr. Lowe was out of the question. Mr. Bright has a leadership of another kind. Mr. Goschen, who was named, was out of harmony with his party on one of the great measures of the future—that of Household Suffrage in the counties. Sir William Harcourt was spoken of by his friends, who called him “the Disraeli of Liberalism;” but Liberalism did not want a Disraeli. Mr. Forster seemed marked out for the leadership by long and distinguished services, and would probably have been chosen if the Liberal leadership in the House of Commons went by merit and service alone. Mr. Forster, however, is suspected of some unsoundness on the ecclesiastical questions which are yearly rising into greater importance. He is perhaps a little too much inclined to balance and compromise, and his quarrel with the Nonconformists had then been only partly healed. Mr. Forster was, nevertheless, much spoken of for the leadership; but a few days before the question came up for final decision, he wrote a letter in which, with a party loyalty which ought to

be remembered in his favour, he confessed that his name failed to receive unanimous support, and withdrew his claims. There remained only Lord Hartington, and at the meeting of Liberal members held under Mr. Bright's presidency, Lord Hartington was proposed by Mr. Charles Villiers, and seconded by Mr. Samuel Morley, and elected by a unanimous vote. The choice was a little like that by which M. Thiers adhered to the French Republic, because it divided Frenchmen least. Lord Hartington, moreover, as the heir of a Liberal Dukedom, had social recommendations which exerted more influence on the choice of a Liberal party which was in temporary discredit, than they would have carried in a time of Liberal popularity and strength. A leader should be born, not made. He should be submitted to by common consent, not called to the post after canvas of his merits. He should be indicated by his unquestioned power of attracting allegiance or kindling enthusiasm. In the absence of any such commanding personality, or indisputable popularity, the choice of the party naturally fell on the man to whom least objection was entertained, and who had most extraneous considerations in his favour. Lord Hartington was that man; and he has succeeded in making the whole party content, if not enthusiastic, with their choice.

There was not much leadership to exercise in the Session which followed. Parliament was opened by a long Queen's Speech with but a short list of domestic measures. The Speech announced the

abolition of slavery on the Gold Coast, a good harvest in India, and a review of the sentence on Langalibalele. The "condition of the tribes and their relation to European settlers and to my government" had come under review; and the Speech added, "I doubt not that I shall have your concurrence in any measures which it may become my duty to adopt for ensuring a wise and humane system of native administration" in Natal. At home, the trade of the country had fallen short of that of the year before, but a good harvest and late reductions in taxation had made the revenue prosperous. A review of the Irish Peace Preservation Acts was promised "with a view to determine whether some of them may not be dispensed with," and Bills were announced for the improvement of working-class dwellings in large towns, for amending the Sanitary laws and for preventing the Pollution of Rivers. A Friendly Society's Bill had a special paragraph to itself, as had a Merchant Shipping Bill, and a Bill for establishing the office of a Public Prosecutor. There was to be a measure on Trade Offences, if the Commission reported, and finally, Parliament was to be "invited to consider a measure for improving the law as to agricultural tenancies."

In the debate on the Address, Lord Hartington stood forward for the first time as Leader of the Liberal party, and made an excellent speech. He asked whether the Government intended to adhere to their programme, inquired after the dropped clauses of the Endowed Schools Bill, which Mr. Disraeli had

promised Mr. Talbot and Mr. Beresford-Hope should be revived; and, quoting the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which they had pledged themselves to deal with Local Government and Local Taxation, compared them with the silence now maintained on these subjects. In conclusion, he drew a picture of the vague expectations which had been nourished by thousands of speeches and newspaper articles, as to the changes the Conservative Government would make when they came to power, and contrasted them with the mild programme—"the wise and temperate policy"—actually presented by the Government to the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli replied in a characteristic speech. He congratulated the Opposition on having a chief, and on the general approval given to the Government programme. He would not pledge himself to adhere to the outline laid down in the Speech from the Throne; and as to the Endowed Schools Bill, "the favourite measure of the noble Lord and his friends," the Commission was working well, and they must wait before reopening the subject. With respect to other questions, there would be a Bill on Trade Offences, if the Royal Commission reported in time, but the question of Local Taxation and Government could only be gradually approached. Mr. Disraeli then turned to the election speeches and pledges, and the expectations based upon them, and, to the delight of the Opposition and the speechless astonishment and confusion of some of his own friends, proceeded to cut himself and his government gaily adrift from them

all. "I will not attempt to vie with the noble Lord, in the masterly picture which he drew of the contrast afforded between the measures brought forward by the Conservative Government and the speeches made, I know not where, and the articles written, which I never read, by what he calls the Conservative Party. There is a most ingenious, but at the same time most inconvenient, course which I have noticed among honourable gentlemen opposite—and to-night the noble Lord has assumed the habit as if he had been born to it—of seeking out the most violent speeches made by the most uninfluential persons in the most obscure places, and the most absurd articles appearing in the dullest and most uninfluential newspapers, and saying these are the opinions of the great Conservative party. The great Conservative party has been legitimately, and I believe very fairly represented on the bench opposite when we were enjoying that freedom which is the noble appanage now of those whom I see before me. The opinions of the Conservative ministry are now expressed from this bench and we are responsible for them, and will not shrink from that responsibility. So I must protest against the grotesque reminiscences of the noble Lord."* Such was the end of the Conservative reaction. In this jaunty fashion the Conservative leader kicked down the ladder by which he and his colleagues had climbed to power. It had helped them out of the pit into which the great overthrow of 1868 had cast them; but it was not to be used by the army of the reaction, and

* Hansard, Vol. 222, col. 73.

Mr. Disraeli flung it down on their heads as they were waiting impatiently to climb it. The "uninfluential persons" who had made violent speeches in obscure places were the great majority of Conservative Members of Parliament; "the absurd articles appearing in the dullest and most uninfluential newspapers" were the leading articles of nearly the whole of the Conservative press all over the Kingdom. There was no doubt of the violence of the speeches nor of the absurdity of the articles; but they were the material by which the Conservative reaction had been fed, and it was something like poetical justice that the Conservative Prime Minister should himself describe them in this emphatic language, after every one of his colleagues had controverted their statements and shown their inferences to be false.

The Session was one of the dullest on record. It began, however, with a great show of business. Within a week of its opening, the Home Secretary had brought in his Artisans' Dwellings Bill; the Chancellor of the Exchequer had reproduced the Friendly Societies Bill; the War Secretary had given the military reactionists a little satisfaction by reintroducing the Regimental Exchanges Bill of the previous year; the President of the Board of Trade had put before the House of Commons the Merchant Shipping Bill; the President of the Local Government Board had explained the new Public Health Bill, and the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had moved for leave to reintroduce the Bill for amending the law of International Copyright. In the House of Lords

the Lord Chancellor had reproduced both the Judicature Bill and the Land Titles and Transfer Bill; and had explained the provisions of a new Patents Bill.

The first of these Bills was, in reality, a Liberal legacy. Mr. Torrens had carried a measure in 1866 which would have enabled local authorities to remove unwholesome dwellings; but Lord Westbury cut it down in the House of Lords by leaving out the clauses which empowered those authorities to give compensation to owners whose property was condemned; and in consequence, the Act was never carried out. In the Session of 1874, Mr. U. Kay Shuttleworth had proposed a resolution declaring that "a necessity exists for some measure that will provide for the improvement of the poorest classes of dwellings in London, and that this question demands the early attention of Her Majesty's Government." The motion was seconded by Sir Sydney Waterlow, who has long and most honourably associated his name with endeavours to improve the dwellings of working people, in London; and after an important debate, was practically accepted by the Government. Mr. Cross's Artisans' Dwellings Bill was brought in as a consequence of this expression of Parliamentary opinion. Mr. Cross described it as a Bill for the suppression of rookeries; but the suppression takes place to the great profit of the owners of the rookeries and the great loss of the ratepayers. "It was notorious," said Mr. Fawcett in the debate on going into Committee, "that the more disgraceful, the more overcrowded,

and the more deficient was the state of many of these houses, the larger was the income they yielded; and the ratepayers would therefore see their money lavishly paid to owners who had allowed their property to fall into such a condition that it had to be condemned as unfit for human habitation.”* Mr. Fawcett also asked what would be the result if it cost say £100,000 an acre to obtain and clear the land, and nobody was prepared to offer more than £10,000 an acre for it, shackled by the proposed conditions as to rebuilding; and in reply to this question a provision was inserted that, in such a case, if the local authority failed to let the land, it might be put up to auction by the Secretary of State at the end of five years. The other forecast of Mr. Fawcett has been realized in London, by the entire failure of the Metropolitan Board of Works to get remunerative prices for the sites they have cleared. The Home Office has put pressure on the Board, and, as a result, that body resolved at its meeting on the 4th of July, 1879, to sell a number of its sites to the Peabody Trustees at twenty years’ purchase on a rental of three-pence a foot. The proposal to do this was opposed on the ground that this bargain involved a loss to the ratepayers of nearly £600,000. But the Chairman of the Board is a devoted supporter of the Government, and Mr. Cross cannot see his much-boasted Act remain so conspicuous a failure; the land was therefore sold, though one member of the Metropolitan Board avowed as his reason for consenting to the sale,

* Hansard, Vol. 223, col. 41.

that it would show the Act to be a mistake ; that in the case in point it would mulct the ratepayers to the extent of half a million of money, and that their eyes would thus be opened to the fact, that if it was not amended they would be still greater sufferers.

The chief party debates of the Session turned on the Regimental Exchanges Bill and the Irish Peace Preservation Bill. The first of these was a small measure of reaction, and its vice was described by the *Daily News* as that of placing wealth at an advantage as compared with talent, character, and services. "Laws dating from the days of the Tudors are set aside in order that the rich officer may avoid unpleasant duties."* Mr. Gladstone reappeared in his place during the discussion in Committee, and made a vigorous protest against "the invidious, I must say the odious, task of deliberately, and with our eyes open; making for the service of the Queen, regulations so that by means of wealth, apart from merit and service, a particular officer is to have advantage over another in choosing the place where he shall serve."† The protests of the Liberal party were unavailing, and the Bill passed. The discussions on the Peace Preservation Bill were more heated. This was a measure which bitterly disappointed the Irish members. They naturally interpreted the hint in the Queen's Speech as a sort of promise that exceptional legislation for the sister island was to be discontinued ; but they found instead that the Act of 1870 was to be perpetuated with slight modifications

* *Daily News*, March 13, 1875.

† Hansard, Vol. 222, col. 1910.

for five years more, and the Westmeath Act of 1871 for two years. The proposal to limit the whole to the two years was supported by the Liberal party and was only defeated by a couple of votes.

In the treatment of two other of their measures, the Government introduced the new principles which the *Daily News* described as legislation by message from a committee out of doors, and legislation by dramatic scene. The Government Bill of 1874, for amending and completing the Judicature Act, was sacrificed in the Commons to the Public Worship Regulation Bill. It was reintroduced in the Lords very early in the Session of 1875, and read a second time without a division before the end of February. When it came on for Committee, the Duke of Buccleuch announced that he would postpone till after Easter his amendment to restore the Appellate Jurisdiction to the House of Lords which, so far as English appeals were concerned, the Act of 1873 took away, and which the Lord Chancellor's Bill would abolish in respect of Ireland and Scotland. Lord Redesdale avowed that this delay was intended to give time for the change of opinion as to the transfer of the jurisdiction to ripen. Next day Mr. Spencer Walpole gave notice in the House of Commons of a similar motion. Meanwhile, an active Committee had been formed outside, and a determined agitation was set up, chiefly by lawyers, in support of these motions in the two Houses of Parliament. The movement was both public and private; but its underground operation was the more powerful. Its result was that

when the Bill was to be reported to the Lords, the Lord Chancellor rose, and with profuse expressions of the deepest regret announced its withdrawal. Lord Selborne made a grave protest against this most extraordinary and unusual method of procedure, and Earl Grey declared that it was not fair to the House nor to the country that the Bill should be abandoned "on private communications and without public discussion." "That a Bill of this importance," said Lord Grey, "should be got rid of in this manner is not, in my opinion, creditable to your Lordships' House, fair to the country, nor calculated to do honour to Her Majesty's Government."* Lord Granville asked what was to be done about the Act which transferred the appellate jurisdiction in English appeals after the coming July; but the Lord Chancellor only intimated that nothing had been resolved on. A month later he introduced a new measure postponing till the 1st of November, 1876, the operation of the clause in the Act of 1873, which transferred the appellate jurisdiction, and constituting an intermediate Court of Appeal. The Bill made several changes in the great Act of 1873 in the interest of the legal profession, and was passed before the Session closed.

The Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill excited more interest out of Parliament than in it. Mr. Plimsoll's efforts had directed universal attention to the frightful sacrifice of life caused by the sending to sea of unseaworthy ships. This interest was reflected by some fifty questions which were asked in

* Hansard, Vol. 222, col. 1377.

the House of Commons, and by a couple of Bills promoted by private members, besides that of the Government. Sir Charles Adderley's Bill had pretty fully met the case; and had been read a second time without a division as early as the 8th of April. It remained before the Commons all the summer, and was several days under consideration in Committee. At length, on the 22nd of July, Mr. Disraeli, with many expressions of regret, announced that it would be withdrawn, in order to allow the Agricultural Holdings Bill to pass. Mr. Goschen protested against the withdrawal, and Mr. Plimsoll then rose to repeat the protest. He began in a most excited way: "I beg, Sir, to move the adjournment of the House. Sir, I earnestly entreat the right honourable gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government not to consign some thousands of living human beings to undeserved and miserable death. Sir, I believe, and I have not hesitated to say, and I told the President of the Board of Trade himself at an early period of the Session—I do not for a moment charge him with breach of faith—that the Bill, of which the first thirty clauses were merely re-enactments, with unimportant exceptions, was so drawn as to afford unlimited facilities for death-dealing volubility, and hypocritical amendments. I adhere to that opinion." After some details of the number of unseaworthy ships sent out every year, Mr. Plimsoll proceeded, his own excitement and that of the House growing with every word, "what is the consequence that ensues? It is that continually, every winter, hundreds and hundreds

of brave men are sent to death, their wives are made widows, and their children are made orphans, in order that a few speculative scoundrels, in whose hearts there is neither the love of God, nor the fear of God, may make unhallowed gains. There are shipowners in this country of ours who have never either built a ship or bought a new one, but who are simply what are called 'ship-knackers,' and I accidentally overheard a member of this House described in the lobby by an ex-Secretary to the Treasury as a ship-knacker." Loud shouts of "Order" here stopped Mr. Plimsoll, and the Speaker reminded him that he could not discuss the merits of the Bill even on a motion for adjournment. "Then, Sir," replied Mr. Plimsoll, "I give notice that on Tuesday next I will put this question to the right honourable gentleman, the President of the Board of Trade. I will ask him whether he will inform the House as to the following ships, the *Tethys*, the *Melbourne*, the *Norah Graeme*, which were all lost in 1874 with eighty-seven lives, and the *Foundling* and *Sydney Dacres*, abandoned in the early part of this year, representing in all a tonnage of 9,000 tons, I shall ask whether the registered owner of these ships, Edward Bates, is the member for Plymouth, or if it is some other person of the same name. [Order.] And, Sir, I shall ask some questions about members on this side of the House also. I am determined to unmask the villains who send to death and destruction"—here the cries of "Order" drowned his voice, and the Speaker rose and asked him if he applied the word "villains" to any members of the House. "I

did, Sir," replied Mr. Plimsoll, "and I do not mean to withdraw it." A loud hum of excitement rose from the House at these words. The Speaker persisted in requiring the withdrawal, and Mr. Plimsoll refused it, and when the Speaker said that he must submit Mr. Plimsoll's conduct to the judgment of the House, Mr. Plimsoll replied, "I shall be happy to submit to the judgment of the House." He then walked up to the table, amid loud cries of "Order," and placed a paper on the table, exclaiming, as he did so, "This is my protest." *

The House of Commons has not often presented a scene of such unrestrained excitement as followed these words. Members rose and tried to lead Mr. Plimsoll to his place, but he pushed them off. Mr. Disraeli at once proposed that Mr. Plimsoll be reprimanded for his violent and disorderly conduct, and when he was expressing his deep pain that a brother member should have conducted himself in a manner almost unparalleled, Mr. Plimsoll exclaimed, "And so has the Government." The Speaker announced that before the motion of reprimand was put, Mr. Plimsoll would be heard in his place and must then withdraw; but Mr. Plimsoll preferred immediate withdrawal, turning round, however, as he left the House and exclaiming, "Do you know that thousands are dying for this?" Lord Hartington and Mr. Sullivan appealed for delay, the latter declaring that Mr. Plimsoll was suffering from "overstrain, acting on a very sensitive temperament,"† and Mr. Disraeli

* Hansard, Vol. 225, cols. 1824, 1825.

† Idem, col. 1827,

at once consented to adjourn the matter for a week. Mr. Fawcett, who had gone out to speak to Mr. Plimsoll, approved of this delay, and confirmed Mr. Sullivan's statement as to Mr. Plimsoll's state. This Parliamentary incident roused strong feeling in the country. Sympathy with Mr. Plimsoll was universal. On the very next day Mr. Chamberlain, the Mayor of Birmingham, called a town's meeting on the subject; and the example was followed by Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, and many other towns, as well as in some of the London boroughs. At all these meetings the Government was warmly denounced for its indifference to human life, and the demand was raised for instant legislation. So strong was the pressure, that the Government gave way. On the last Wednesday in July the Committee on the Agricultural Holdings Bill was suspended to allow Sir Charles Adderley to bring in a temporary Bill, giving great powers to the Board of Trade to detain bad ships, and enacting that grain should not be carried in bulk when it made more than a third of the cargo. On the next day Mr. Plimsoll made a well-worded apology for his conduct, but added that he did not withdraw any statement of fact. Mr. Disraeli cordially accepted the apology, and moved that the order for Mr. Plimsoll's reprimand should be discharged, which was done after a growl from Mr. Bentinek and a grumble from Mr. Newdegate. The new Bill easily passed, and in a little more than a fortnight had received the Royal assent.

Mr. Disraeli made the best of the sudden change of face. He had a sympathizing audience at the Mansion House on the 4th of August, when the Bill was just a week old; but he had already forgotten its history. He told the Lord Mayor and his guests that the original Merchant Shipping Bill of the Government wanted popular help. "It was crank, sometimes we thought it was waterlogged." He continued: "I think it was on the Monday that the Government announced that they had given up their Bill. The Cabinet was to have met on Wednesday, and would then have considered the position of affairs. But in consequence of that dramatic scene which occurred in the House of Commons, which had a beneficial effect in eliciting some public sentiment for which for six months we had waited in vain, I asked my colleagues at once to assemble, and we at once agreed that we would ask for those statutory powers which we found were needful." * The extraordinary inaccuracy of this statement was not publicly noticed at the time; but it must have astounded Mr. Disraeli's colleagues who sat at the Lord Mayor's table and listened to it. There was indeed an announcement on Monday, July 18, respecting public business, but Mr. Disraeli, who made it, said that when the Committee on the Agricultural Holdings Bill was over he proposed that they should continue the Committee on the Merchant Shipping Bill, and he added, "of course these two measures will take some time." Considerable discussion followed this

* *Daily News*, August 5, 1875.

announcement. Lord Hartington pointed out that the business could not be got through; Mr. Disraeli thereupon promised to make a further announcement early in the next week, and Mr. Bentinck expressed his regret that the Merchant Shipping Bill was to be proceeded with. It was not till Thursday, and as the result of the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, that the Government announced the giving up of the Bill, and that announcement was fully intended to be final. Then followed the "dramatic incident" of Mr. Plimsoll's outburst; but that circumstance had no effect whatever on the intentions of the Ministry. It was not till the echo came back from the country in an extraordinary outburst of indignation at the indifference of the Government to the wrongs of the seamen, that a Cabinet meeting was held in hot haste and a sudden scheme resolved on. Mr. Disraeli's Mansion House audience did not know these things, and listened gravely to his historical romance; but when he proceeded to say that the new Bill "was introduced with the opinion of the country so greatly in its favour as to assist what was really the policy of the Government," the Lord Mayor's guests burst into laughter.

The Agricultural Holdings Bill, to which the Government were ready to sacrifice the Merchant Shipping Bill, was a purely political measure. Mr. Disraeli had promised Mr. Seely, in the previous Session, that the question of security for improvements by agricultural tenants should be brought before Parliament in the next Session. The promise

raised great expectations, and Mr. Disraeli increased those expectations by assuring a deputation of tenant farmers that it would be "of a thorough nature," and would give "great and general satisfaction to the farmers of the United Kingdom." The Bill was introduced by the Duke of Richmond in the House of Lords, in a speech which seemed to intimate that it was the eventual accomplishment of what Mr. Philip Pusey had contended for; and which that inventor of "tenant right," with Mr. Denison, afterwards Speaker, and Mr., now Sir T. D. Acland, had proposed in a Bill twenty-eight years before. Mr. Pusey's Bill was compulsory. It declared in its preamble, that it was "expedient for the better security of farmers to encourage and extend the custom of agricultural tenant-right, in accordance with the modern advance of husbandry;" and it provided that any agreement contrary to its provisions should be void. The Duke of Richmond's Bill was permissive; and through all the discussions upon it, the permissive clause was adhered to. There was a fear in some quarters that the Government might yield, and a secret agitation was carried on by the landlord majority in both Houses of Parliament to prevent this disaster. The flag of "freedom of contract" was waved in the faces of those who urged that the apparent concessions the Bill made to tenant right should be real; and the Bill was passed as a permissive measure. It has consequently remained to the present moment almost a dead letter on the statute-book.

The other ministerial measures of the year were

more successful. The Friendly Societies Bill was a mild and timid result of the long inquiry which the previous Government had carried on. It was permissive; but the permission it gives has been acted on. Mr. Cross's Bills to modify the Labour Laws, the Employers' and Workmen's Bill, and the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Bill, were in no sense party or political schemes. The Government accepted some important suggestions from the Opposition; and the latter Bill owes its most valuable and characteristic feature to Mr. Lowe, who suggested the definition of molestation which Mr. Cross afterwards adopted, by which a penalty of two months' imprisonment is imposed, not on workmen only, but on any person found guilty of following any other person about, hiding his property, or watching or besetting him, "with a view seriously to annoy or intimidate him." The Patents Bill came to nothing. The Land Titles and Transfer Bill was passed as a permissive measure, and was named in the Queen's Speech at the close of the Session, but a Select Committee reported to the House of Commons, in June, 1879, that it had been a more conspicuous failure than even Lord Westbury's Act. The International Copyright Bill was passed. The Public Health Bill, which contained not a single new clause, but was a mere consolidation of existing Acts, also got through. There was a small measure dealing with the law of entail in Scotland, and a valuable little Act for the Registration of Trade Marks. The Sale of Food and Drugs Bill was a small reaction hidden under a con-

cession to tradesmen who had been somewhat harassed under the old Adulteration Act. Lord Carnarvon carried a much needed Act for the protection of Pacific Islanders, and Mr. Cross's Metalliferous Mines Bill was also carried without much debate. The Epping Forest Bill, and the Explosives Bill were necessitated by local events, and were both valuable. Two or three other small measures were equally successful. It was a year of little schemes. It showed conclusively that the Government could not do anything great.

In his Mansion House speech Mr. Disraeli spoke of the Session as a "crucial" one. It was the first in which the new Ministers had had their own way, and had been able to develop their policy. He claimed that out of the eleven measures named in the Queen's Speech nine had been passed. This statement was, however, entirely inaccurate. Twelve measures were actually named in the Queen's Speech, and of these, one—that for establishing the office of a Public Prosecutor—was never afterwards mentioned; a second, "for the better security of my subjects from personal violence," which was, in fact, a flogging Bill, was withdrawn, and a Bill of some private member's passed; Lord Salisbury's Pollution of Rivers Bill was sacrificed, the Merchant Shipping Bill, and the Judicature Bill, were both withdrawn, and temporary measures substituted for them; and the only proposals named in the Speech which became law, were the over-estimated Artizan's Dwellings Act; the unsuccessful Land Transfer Act, the useless Agricultural Holdings Act, the feeble

Friendly Societies Act ; the two Bills dealing successively with the Labour Question ; the Irish Peace Preservation Act, and the measure “ for the Consolidation and Amendment of the Sanitary Laws,” which merely consolidated them, and did not in any solitary particular amend them.

It is, in England, with Sessions of Parliament as with the seasons, those which are barren are usually stormy. The Session of 1875 disproved Mr. Disraeli's claims to efficient leadership of the House of Commons. The election of John Mitchel, for Tipperary, led to a refusal by the House to receive him, on the ground that he had escaped from his sentence of fourteen years' transportation, by breaking his parole. Mr. John Martin, who had gained universal esteem and respect during the short period in which he represented Meath, made the striking declaration in the course of the debate : “ I, John Martin, member for Meath, who am called honourable by the courtesy of this House, and who value my honour above all other kind of reputation, declare that if John Mitchel broke his parole, I broke mine.”* On a second election Mitchel again headed the poll, but a Conservative competitor claimed and got the seat. Mr. Mitchel said and did curiously little while the storm about him raged ; he was too ill for the excitement, and died as soon as it was over. Mr. Martin caught cold at his funeral, and speedily followed his brother-in-law ; and Mr. Parnell was elected in his place. Mr. Disraeli showed more consideration when Dr. Kenealy, who

* Hansard, Vol. 222, col. 519.

had been elected for Stoke on Mr. Melly's retirement, presented himself at the table without the usual escort of two members to introduce him. The Speaker at first refused to receive the new member, but Mr. Disraeli asked that the rule should be dispensed with, and Dr. Kenealy was admitted in the usual way. Dr. Kenealy raised a good many small but acrimonious discussions; and one day he presented a petition from the village of Prittlewell, which described the Claimant as an "unhappy nobleman." The words have been so often quoted since that the populace have got to believe that a baronet is a "nobleman." The petition contained aspersions on the Speaker, and the House refused to receive it. When Dr. Kenealy brought on his motion on the Tichborne case, a considerable debate ensued, if speaking on one side can be so regarded; and he and Mr. Whalley had the honour of counting one supporter on a division against 433. The one supporter was Major O'Gorman.

One outbreak of disorder had permanent results. Early in the Session Mr. Disraeli allowed Mr. Charles Lewis to lead him into a position which made both him and the House ridiculous. A letter had been inserted in the *Times* and the *Daily News*, which had been addressed by the Honduras Minister at Paris to Mr. Lowe, as Chairman of the Foreign Loans Committee. Mr. Lewis brought the matter before the House, and a sudden resolution was passed, calling on the printers of the two papers to attend on the next day at the bar of the House. The printers, who had no more to do with the insertion of the letter

than the newsvendors who sold the papers, duly attended in the lobby, but Mr. Disraeli, who had had a day to think of the matter, moved that the Order be discharged, which, after discussion, was carried unanimously. Soon after this debate Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Disraeli whether he meant to do anything with respect to the anomalous relations between the House and the Press. Mr. Disraeli answered No, and Mr. Sullivan then gave notice, that he would every evening "espy strangers," till something was done. On an appeal from Lord Hartington, Mr. Sullivan desisted from this course; but a few days later Mr. Biggar "espied strangers," one of whom was the Prince of Wales, who had to leave. Mr. Disraeli at once moved to suspend for that evening the Order excluding strangers, which was seconded by Lord Hartington and carried. As Mr. Disraeli still declined to do anything to remedy the inconvenience caused by a Standing Order which admitted of such misuse, Lord Hartington proposed a resolution declaring that the House would hear no complaints as to reports of its proceedings, except when it met with closed doors, or had forbidden publication, or the report was a wilful misrepresentation. Mr. Disraeli refused to accept this suggestion, and urged that the House should do nothing. Mr. Sullivan replied by "espying strangers," and clearing the galleries after the first few words of Mr. Gathorne Hardy's speech. This step forced Mr. Disraeli to reconsider his decision, and after assuring the House that it "would find Parliamentary privilege a delicate

thing to deal with,"* he consented to the adjournment of the debate. Lord Hartington's resolution was defeated, and he proposed a second, empowering the Speaker to exclude strangers when his attention was called to them, but not requiring him to do so. Mr. Disraeli moved an amendment, changing the form of the resolution, which Lord Hartington accepted, and the House adopted it unanimously. By the new Standing Order thus established, the Speaker or Chairman of Committee may exclude strangers whenever he sees fit to do so, but if any member calls his attention to the presence of strangers, the question that they be ordered to withdraw is to be put to the vote at once, without amendment or debate.

The Foreign Loans Committee, in connection with which this discussion arose, was appointed, at the instance of Sir Henry James, to inquire into certain fraudulent Foreign Loans. The question of these Loans belongs rather to trade than to politics, and the inquiry by a Select Committee of the House of Commons was regarded as somewhat unusual. But the appointment of the Committee was abundantly justified. Their Report remains as a perpetual caution to the investing public. The whole story of the Honduras, Paraguayan, Costa Rican and San Domingo Loans is told in minute detail; and the hope is expressed that the history will "tend to enlighten the public, and render it more difficult for unscrupulous persons to carry out schemes such as those"† it describes. The exposure

* Hansard, Vol. 224, col. 93. † "Report," last par., p. 50.

has not prevented sanguine investors from running after six and eight per cent., but it has made even such people shy of Foreign Loans. The Report led to very little. It was the main support of Mr. Reginald Yorke's argument when, at a later period, he forced the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Stock Exchange, but no effort was made to punish frauds, a remedy for which, the Report declared, ought to be found in the tribunals of the country.

The Finance of the Session was in great contrast to that of the preceding year. The bounding elasticity which characterized the revenue under Mr. Gladstone, was at once transferred under Mr. Disraeli to the expenditure, and the very first financial statement for which Sir Stafford Northcote was wholly responsible showed that the inflow was already slackening and the outflow had already increased. Each of the great spending departments asked for more, and two great branches of the revenue yielded less. The Expenditure of the year had been £74,328,040, being £370,040 more than the Budget Estimate, and £244,513 more than was provided for in the Appropriation Act. The Revenue had been £74,921,873, being £496,873 more than the Budget Estimate. The surplus, which had been estimated at £467,000 actually amounted to £593,833. The marked feature of the Revenue was pointed out by Mr. Childers, "that the three items of receipts which it has always been the practice to watch, and which indicate, above all, the progress

and prosperity of the country, and are the tests of its financial advance, I mean Customs, Excise and Stamps, for the first time since the year 1868 show a deficit, when compared with the amounts estimated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The deficit is indeed small—only £6,000—still it is a deficit.”* With respect to the year just begun, the Estimate of Expenditure was £75,268,000, an increase of £939,000 over the actual outlay of the preceding year, and of £2,765,000 over the Estimate for that year which had been left by Mr. Gladstone’s Government. The Revenue for the current year 1875-6 was estimated at £75,685,000, leaving a surplus of £417,000, subject to diminution by Supplementary Estimates. Sir Stafford Northcote proposed to dispose of this in part by readjusting Brewers’ Licences at a cost of £60,000, and reducing the Stamp Duty on Appointments, which would lose £6,000. His great scheme, however, and that which distinguished the Budget of the year, was that for beginning the paying off of the National Debt. The Interest on the Debt for the year was reckoned at £27,215,000; Sir Stafford Northcote proposed to fix it in future at £28,000,000 and use the surplus in reducing the principal of the Debt. This was to be done by three steps, £27,400,000 was to be charged for the current year; for the year 1876-7 it was to be £27,700,000, and for 1877-8 and all succeeding years the full sum of £28,000,000. The scheme was severely criticized, but was popular, and passed. It is clearly a

* Hansard, Vol. 223, col. 1051.

prudent step, but it reduced the estimated surplus even of the current year by £185,000, in addition to the loss on Brewers' Licences, and a small loss on Stamps on Appointments. The Expenditure was eventually increased by a Supplementary Estimate for £417,000, which was brought up at the close of the Session. The Budget surplus was thus turned into a deficit of about £300,000. In bringing in this additional Estimate the Chancellor expressed a hope that it would be met by the increased revenue which was then exceeding the expectations he had formed respecting it earlier in the year.

In Mr. Disraeli's review of this "crucial Session," in the Mansion House Speech already described, he said nothing of a division which many people outside regarded as the most "crucial" of the year. Mr. Osborne Morgan's Burials Bill, which had been approved four times by decisive majorities in the last Parliament, occupied the new Parliament for the first time on the third Wednesday morning in April. It was supported in important speeches by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, and drew forth a Liberal speech from Mr. Roebuck. The debate was wound up by Mr. Bright in one of the most eloquent and persuasive speeches he has ever spoken. He made a powerful protest against the "miserable superstition" of the phrase "buried like a dog"—"Why, in that sense, I shall be 'buried like a dog,' and all those with whom I am best acquainted, whom I best love and esteem, shall be 'buried like a dog.' Nay, more, my own ancestors, who in past time suffered persecution

for what is now held to be a righteous cause, have all been buried like dogs—if that phrase is true.”* He then gave so touching an account of the mode of burial in his own sect that the House was visibly affected. In the division which immediately followed, the Liberal vote was larger than in any previous division in the existing Parliament. The highest Liberal vote hitherto had been 209 on the Endowed Schools Bill in 1874; the second reading of Mr. Osborne Morgan’s Bill was supported by 234 votes. There were 248 against it, so that the majority which sustained the intolerant arrangements which make our Burial laws the scandal of Christendom was only fourteen.

* Hansard, Vol. 223, col. 1413.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANXIETIES AND MISTAKES.

WHILE Mr. Disraeli was flourishing his table napkin at the Lord Mayor's table on the 4th of August, in vindication of the "crucial Session," the elements of a serious storm were being prepared by some of his colleagues. A Circular, issued on the 31st of July, was on its way to our Naval Officers in Foreign waters, imposing on them a new policy in the treatment of Fugitive Slaves. The Circular belongs to the dead leaves of history, and neither it nor its amended edition need to be very fully described. They may be found in the Appendix to the "Annual Register" for the year.* The first Circular was an argumentative document. It was not only a new order, but an elaborate explanation of the reasons for giving it, and in fact an apology for it. A Fugitive Slave was never to be received on board a British ship "unless his life would be endangered if he were not allowed to come on board." If he came on board in territorial waters, he was not to be allowed to remain if it was proved that he was a slave. If he were received on the high seas, he was to be given up when the vessel returned within the territorial limits of the country

* "Annual Register" for 1875. Appendix, p. 224.

from which he had escaped. If he claimed protection on the ground that he had been detained contrary to treaty, the case was to be investigated in presence of his detainers, and if his claim was established, "the local authorities should be requested to take steps to insure his not relapsing into slavery." Finally, the officers were exhorted, when surrendering fugitive slaves, "to obtain an assurance that the slaves will not be treated with undue severity."

It was the second week in September before the public knew of the issue of these instructions. When a correspondent of the *Daily News* discovered the Circular,* and that journal called public attention to it, some members of the Cabinet are said to have doubted its authenticity. They saw it for the first time in the *Daily News*. The public, however, read it with a feeling of the deepest indignation. It reversed what everybody believed to be English policy. A great agitation quickly sprang up, and in the latter part of September, meetings were held all over the Kingdom. On the 7th of October Lord Derby went down to Liverpool, and told the public that the Government had decided to withdraw the Circular. At the same time he stated that it merely expressed the actual state of the law as the highest authorities had declared it. The authorities proved to be Sir John Karslake, Sir Richard Baggallay, and Sir John Holker, while the Lord Chancellor had not been consulted. The Government found that they had made a mistake

* See *Daily News*, Sept. 9, letter signed G., and headed, "Slavery under the British Flag."

as to public feeling, and Lord Cairns being consulted at last told them they were in error as to their law. The Circular was consequently suspended, and a month later withdrawn, and the Government were congratulated on their quickness in recognizing their blunder and repairing it. But it was only temporarily repaired. The Circular, which had been concocted in July, kept secret through August, found out in September, suspended in October, and withdrawn in November, was reissued in December in a modified form. The new edition had the benefit of the Lord Chancellor's editorial care, and was declared to embody the law on the subject. The new Circular proved to be as cold and cruel as the old one. It gave up the order to restore a fugitive found on the high seas; but those who came on board in territorial waters were not to be retained. Our officers were told that they were "bound by the comity of nations" not to allow their ships "to become a shelter for those who would be chargeable with the violation of the law of the place." They were not to give up people whose assertion of their freedom was a "violation of the law of the place;" but they were not to inquire into their status, only to put them quietly ashore again. The slaves were not to be surrendered to their masters; they were to be put ashore where their masters could catch them. In this way the public hatred of slavery was to be harmonized with the interests of the slave owners. The public, of course, saw through the scheme, and a large number of meetings took place during the latter part of the recess. The Govern-

ment again wavered, and the Queen's Speech at the opening of the Session announced that the whole subject had been referred to a Royal Commission.

This reference in the Queen's Speech brought out another striking example of the Prime Minister's inaccuracy. In the debate on the Address he told the House he did not defend the first Circular. It was a mistake, it had been withdrawn, and the country had condoned the error. But it seemed needful to explain why the Government had not let the matter alone, and Mr. Disraeli had an ingenious reason. He told the House that "our officers on foreign stations found themselves every now and then committing acts in the most innocent-minded manner, which ended in actions being brought against them, damages being incurred, and compensation being paid by this country for them."* This was the first that Parliament had heard of such actions or such compensation, and Mr. William Holms moved for a Return, giving the details. The Return extended over thirty-seven years. During those years only seven cases had occurred of any slaves taking refuge on British ships, and in these only fifteen persons were concerned. In no single case had any action been brought, any damages been incurred, or any compensation been paid.† Early in February Mr. Whitbread raised the whole question by a motion declaring that a slave on one of our ships should be regarded as free, and asking that all Circulars, Instructions, and Orders to the contrary should be withdrawn. The Government

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 91.

† Id., col. 729.

met it by pleading the Royal Commission, and after two nights' debate (February 22 and 24) were sustained by a majority of 293, against a minority of 248, the Liberal vote being larger by fourteen than even the great vote on Mr. Morgan's Bill in the previous Session. The Royal Commission reported later in the year, when the subject had been almost forgotten. The Report quietly let the Government down, and made a feather bed for them to fall on. It put considerations of humanity in the forefront of our policy, and substantially restored the old honourable rule, established by the decision in the case of the slave Somerset in 1772, by which a slave owner's power ceases on a British ship. The officer is now empowered to retain the escaped fugitive if he is in danger of being cruelly used.

The recess which witnessed this Fugitive Slave agitation was a most unfortunate one for the Admiralty. The Foreign Office shared the blame in that case, but in two other cases it was borne by the naval department alone. When the Queen was leaving Osborne for Gosport, on the 18th of August, the Royal Yacht ran down the schooner *Mistletoe*, with Mr. Heywood, its owner, and his sisters-in-law Miss Annie and Miss Eleanor Peel on board. Miss Annie Peel was drowned, Miss Eleanor Peel was saved with difficulty, and the master was killed. The event created a feeling of indignant consternation, not only among the yachtsmen who swarm in the Solent and Spithead, but wherever the rule of the road at sea was known, that steamers must keep out of the way of sailing

vessels. The *Alberta* was tearing through the water of Stokes Bay at the rate of from fifteen to seventeen miles an hour, and her officers kept no effective look-out, acting on the assumption that everybody else must look out for themselves when the Royal Yacht is passing by. Mr. Heywood acted on the Rules laid down, and was run over. No court-martial was held, but the Admiralty made a private inquiry, screening Prince Leiningen, the superior officer, and visiting Captain Welsh, the navigating captain, with a reprimand. The coroner's inquests could not be avoided, and two were held, but in one the jury was twice dismissed without being able to agree; in the other the jury brought in a verdict of accidental death, but, in a rider, expressed the opinion that the Royal Yacht should travel at a lower speed and a better look-out should be kept. The matter was then hushed up, and Mr. Anderson, who brought the subject before Parliament in the succeeding Session, said that the nation's money had been used as hush-money, to screen persons in high places.* Mr. Anderson asked the House to express the opinion that in the circumstances the Government should have taken further steps to vindicate public justice. The motion was, of course, opposed by the Government, and lost, on a division, by a majority of 157 against 65.

In the very midst of the excitement caused by this event came the news of a collision between two great ironclad ships. The accident to the *Vanguard* took place a fortnight later than the wreck of the *Mistletoe*.

* Hansard, Vol. 228, col. 1488.

Five ironclads of the Channel Fleet, under Vice-Admiral Tarleton, were steaming from Kingstown to Queenstown on the 1st of September, and about mid-day, being off the Wicklow coast, they came into a dense fog, when the *Iron Duke* ran into the *Vanguard*, making a vast rent below the water-line, through which the ship filled. There was nothing to do but to get the men off safely, and this had been accomplished, when, within half-an-hour of the collision, the ship sank. A court-martial was held on her officers, and its finding was that the squadron was going too fast in the fog, that Captain Dawkins, of the *Vanguard*, had left the deck at a critical moment, and needlessly reduced the speed of his vessel without signalling to the *Iron Duke*, and that the *Iron Duke* increased her speed during a fog, improperly steered out of line, and gave no fog signal. Captain Dawkins was also blamed for want of judgment and resource, and for not ordering the *Iron Duke* to tow the *Vanguard* at once into shoaler water. Captain Dawkins was, therefore, reprimanded and dismissed the service, and the other officers were reprimanded. A fortnight after this sentence was promulgated, a review of it was sent out by the Admiralty. Of the six causes of the collision found by the court-martial, one was the fault of the Admiral, two were chargeable on Captain Dawkins, and three on Captain Hickley and the officers of the *Iron Duke*. The Admiralty whitewashed Vice-Admiral Tarleton, acquitted Captain Hickley of all blame, but cashiered Lieutenant Evans, his subordinate, without putting him on his trial, or giving

him an opportunity for defence. The sentence on Captain Dawkins was confirmed. Lord Lauderdale, in a debate in the House of Lords in the following March, expressed the general feeling on this course of procedure. "In the merchant service," he said, "the commander of the vessel which ran down another was placed on his trial, and it must appear strange to civilians that the rule was reversed in the navy, and that the man whose ship was run down was placed on his trial, while the commander of the running-down ship got off scot free."* Mr. Bentinck expressed a very general naval opinion in the House of Commons on the same day, by saying that the Admiralty Minute on the *Vanguard* would probably never have appeared had a sailor been at the head of the Admiralty.† Mr. Ward Hunt had made a gay allusion to the subject in his speech at the November banquet in the Guildhall. He took the whole responsibility on himself, and expressed himself as without doubt that when the time came for him to be challenged to enter on the matter, the justice of his adjudication would be fully acknowledged. When the time came, Mr. Goschen challenged him, and all the world felt that he made a lame defence. His honesty was universally admitted, his discretion was, as universally, blamed.

These gross perversions of justice brought the Government much unpopularity in the recess in which they happened; but a lucky chance gave them the opportunity of a temporary redemption of

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 1863.

† Id., col. 1875.

their credit. On the 26th of November it was announced that the British Government had bought the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal for four millions of money. Nobody knew exactly what the transaction meant, but people were in the mood to be astonished, and they were astonished accordingly. There was what Mr. Gladstone afterwards described as "a tempest of approval."* Here was the spirited foreign policy at last. The Eastern Question was settled at a stroke. The French were outgeneralled, Russia was checkmated, and the alliance of the Three Emperors was rendered harmless. Let them partition the East of Europe if they chose, British interests were unassailable now that the road to India was secure. The English people need trouble their heads no more about the fate of Turkey. The Prime Minister had promised that British interests should be guarded and maintained, and in this simple, easy, yet effectual manner he had exercised the guardianship. European opinion was almost as much excited as the public mind at home. "It is the inauguration of a new kind of conquest—conquest by mortgage," said M. John Lemoinne, in the *Journal des Débats*. It was the nine days' wonder of modern politics. Speaking of it to the Oxford Druids, on the 30th of December, Sir William Harcourt said: "There was something Asiatic in this mysterious melodrama. It was like the 'Thousand and One Nights,' when in the midst of the fumes of incense a shadowy Genius astonishes the bewildered spectators. The public mind was dazzled,

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 599.

fascinated, mystified. We had done, we did not know exactly what—we were not told precisely why—*omne ignotum pro magnifico.*”

For some time the Ministers kept a judicious silence. On the very day after the transaction, Lord Derby had fully explained it to the French Chargé d’Affaires, but no word of explanation was given to the people at home. The members of the Cabinet were themselves more astonished than anybody at the sensation they had created. They had no idea, till they were told, what a wonderful stroke of policy they had accomplished. In a few days, however, audacious politicians began to ask what it all meant. Mr. Fawcett, speaking at Hackney on the last day of November, said that the spending of £4,000,000 before it had been voted by Parliament was a temporary suspension of the constitution, and even Sir Walter Barttelot expressed the opinion that Parliament should be immediately called together to vote the money. The praises lavished on the scheme brought out a claimant for the honour of its paternity; and it appeared that Mr. F. Greenwood, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* had named it to Mr. Henry Oppenheim at his dinner-table, and finding Mr. Oppenheim approved, had hurried off to put the suggestion before Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli. Meanwhile the French Government had laid before the Assembly the despatch of its representative, giving Lord Derby’s frank explanation of the transaction. Lord Derby told the French Chargé d’Affaires that it was only at the beginning of the week the Government knew the

intention and need of the Khedive to sell his shares, that his own wish was that the Khedive should keep them; but that finding he could not do so, the Government had bought them, "solely with the intention of preventing a larger foreign influence from preponderating in a matter so important to us." This explanation was too simple to be accepted at home. Friends and foes of the Government persisted in seeing in the purchase of the shares some deep political design. Lord Hartington appealed for explanation, and Lord Derby at once responded. Speaking at Sheffield, on the 15th of December, the Liberal leader said that if the Ministry had embarked on a new and vast policy, it was due to the country that they should give Parliament the earliest opportunity of approving or disapproving of it. In a speech at Edinburgh, on the 17th, the Foreign Secretary replied that no new or vast policy had been thought of, but that the Government "had to deal in some haste with a wholly unforeseen contingency," and in doing so, had "sought no exclusion, no monopoly, only a secure passage for ourselves, and that same security we are willing that all the world should enjoy." Lord Derby was able to add, by way of warning to those who refused to take his explanation of the transaction: "We have told Europe what we want and why we want it, and Europe is in the habit of believing what we say." Lord Derby's frankness was most inconvenient to his colleagues, by pricking the bubble reputation which had been blown for them out of the Nile mud. It was found, however,

that they had, in some degree, committed themselves to a course of meddling and muddling in Egyptian finance, in which they have since been made the victims of French policy ; and that they had begun by making an improvident bargain with the Rothschilds, by which the whole profit and advantage of the transaction remained in the hands of that firm, in the shape of commission, which, as Mr. Gladstone afterwards pointed out, amounted to £130,000, or fifteen per cent. per annum for a risk “ which any rational man would have taken at the cost of one brass farthing.”*

The financial collapse of the Turkish Government only belongs to the political history of England by its indirect results. It was announced at the close of October, and one reason for the loud rejoicing raised over the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares was that a vast number of holders of Egyptian securities saw themselves suddenly saved from the ruin which had fallen on the creditors of Turkey. The Turkish Loans are chiefly held in England, and give large numbers of people in the middle and upper ranks a strong pecuniary interest in the preservation of Turkish rule. Most of them were issued at prices which proved irresistibly tempting to avaricious investors. Five millions of bonds were issued in 1858 at $62\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. bearing 6 per cent. interest ; another eight millions were issued in 1862, at 68 per cent., bearing the same interest. In 1863 eight millions were issued at 72 per cent.; and in 1865 six millions

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 591.

more at 66 per cent. In the same year the interior debt was consolidated, and nearly a hundred millions were borrowed at 5 per cent. interest, the price of issue being about 50 per cent. In 1869, twenty-two millions of bonds, bearing 6 per cent. interest, were issued at $60\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; five and three quarter millions more at 73 per cent. were issued in 1871; and twenty-seven and three quarter millions in 1873 at $58\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In 1872 eleven millions had been borrowed in the same way at 9 per cent. interest, the amount paid for each £100 being £98 10s.* In this gambling fashion a large debt had been accumulated within twenty years, and the lenders had received from ten to twelve per cent. on the money they had actually advanced. The interest was duly paid, and the repayments were made till the end of 1875, when the Turkish Government announced that from the 1st of January, 1876, till the 1st of January, 1881, the engagements of the debt should be paid half in cash and half in five per cent. bonds, with five years to run. These terms would have been sufficient had they been observed. A lender who had paid, as in the case of the 1873 loan, only £58 10s. for each £100 with which he was credited, was making eleven per cent. on his money; and if only the half interest were paid he would be receiving three pounds a year for every £58 10s. he had invested. The Turkish Government, however, could not keep even this promise. Some of the bondholders received the payments due in January, 1876, but nothing has

* See "Stock Exchange Year Book for 1879," pp. 27, 28.

been paid from that time, and some £165,000,000 of Turkish debt has become almost worthless in the hands of its holders. The market value of £100 of the 1873 bonds is about £12 10s., and that is probably twelve times their worth.

The influence of this repudiation on English politics has been very striking. It caused at first an explosion of impatience and disgust. It was partly the reason why, in the great outburst of feeling caused by the massacres in Bulgaria, no voice was raised for the Turks. But it was also, and more fully, the reason why, at a later period, a pro-Turkish reaction was set up. The hope of saving some part at least of a bad speculative investment prompted a passionate outcry against all those who would have reformed the Turkish government from off the face of Europe. The rejuvenation of Islam, which was preached in some quarters with the fervour of fanaticism, was only a rhetorical phrase for the rehabilitation of Turkish credit. The faith in the noble Turk which politicians not noted for their trust in anything devotedly professed, was an admiration for a Government which had for some years paid six pounds interest on every sixty-six, or sixty-eight, or seventy-one pounds which trustful lenders had advanced to it. Such a Government could not be allowed to be swept away with all its obligations on its head. It must be defended, if need be, even by the arms of England. Lord Derby, indeed, gave the bondholders very scanty consolation when they visited him just after the offer of ten shillings in the pound. Lord Beaconsfield and Lord

Salisbury better knew how to turn their enthusiasm for indebted Islam to political account.

The Turkish collapse had been foreshadowed in a debate in the House of Commons, in June, in which Mr. Reginald Yorke and Mr. Baillie Cochrane had drawn very gloomy pictures of the complete decay of the Turkish Government. In the same way other events had cast their shadows before them. The harsh treatment of the Kaffir chief, Langalibalele, had resulted in the recall of the Governor of Natal, Sir Benjamin Pine, and the sending out of Sir Garnet Wolseley as High Commissioner, specially charged with the duty of reviewing and resettling the relations between the colonists and the natives. He carried out his temporary mission with great energy and success, and having set the finances of the colony in order, increased the power of the Home Government in its Legislative Council, and made a six weeks' tour of inspection through the territory, handed it over to its new Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Henry Bulwer. Lord Carnarvon, meanwhile, had resolved on attempting to form a Confederation of the three British colonies of the Cape, Natal, and Griqualand West, in which the two Dutch Republics—the Transvaal, or South African Republic, and the Orange River Free State—should be invited to join. A Conference was to be held on the subject, and Mr. J. A. Froude was sent out as the representative of this country in the matter. The proposal was resented by the Ministry of Cape Colony, and Mr. Froude resolved to explain the objects of his mission to the people themselves.

He addressed various public meetings, in which he severely attacked the local government. The Cape Legislature passed a resolution denouncing the agitation thus carried on by a representative of the Home Government as unconstitutional, the Confederation scheme collapsed, and Mr. Froude came back. A year later other anxieties had supervened. The quarrel of the Dutch farmers with the Caffres had alarmed both Cape Colony and Natal; and at the end of 1876, Sir Henry Barkly was recalled, and Sir Bartle Frere sent out to take his place as Governor at the Cape.

The journey of the Prince of Wales to India was the most striking event of the Parliamentary recess. As a holiday journey the tour was one of the most splendid and the most successful ever undertaken. Its political results have not answered the expectations indulged at home. The Ministry made some use of it in the debates on the Royal Titles Bill; and it may have done something to quicken the interest in India and in Indian subjects which is beginning to be felt in England; but there is unfortunately no reason to believe that it exerted any favourable influence whatever on Indian loyalty. Meanwhile the Indian Government was passing through a crisis. Lord Salisbury distinguished his administration at the India Office by drawing tighter the rein which the Government at home has on the Government in Calcutta. The Viceroy has been reduced to subjection to the Secretary of State. Even the Indian Council has been practically superseded by the Indian

Minister. The first result of this change was the loss of Lord Northbrook's services, and the premature close of his wise and just and most successful administration. Lord Northbrook resigned in January 1876, before he had been four years in India. He was succeeded by Lord Lytton—the statesman by the writer of meretricious verse, the practical man by the dreamer—as, at home, Mr. Gladstone had been succeeded by Lord Beaconsfield. The change has in each case had similar results. A war policy superseded the policy of peace, the national expenditure outran the income, and a settled despondency took the place of hopeful and energetic efforts at improvement.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

WHILE the bankruptcy of the Turkish Empire was still only imminent, and before the financial intervention in Egypt had been dreamed of, there had been many signs of the revival of the question of the East. Early in July Lord Derby had received from Mr. Consul Holmes a report of disturbances in the Herzegovina, and about the middle of August the same official reported an extremely serious insurrection in the north of Bosnia. On the suggestion of Sir Henry Elliot, Lord Derby in the middle of July authorized Consul Holmes to go to Mostar and see what the state of Herzegovina was. Mr. Holmes had previously got all his information from Turkish sources; at Mostar he saw everything through Turkish eyes and reported accordingly. Early in August the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Safvet Pacha, telegraphed an alarming account of the spread of the insurrection to Musurus Pacha, the Turkish Ambassador in London, represented that it received aid and countenance from Austrian subjects as well as from Servia and Montenegro, and asked Lord Derby to remonstrate. Lord Derby responded to this appeal with alacrity. In two days the English Minister at Vienna had

been instructed to hint to Count Andrassy that Austria should prevent the insurgents from receiving support or encouragement from Austrian territory, the British Agent at Belgrade had been told to appeal to the Servian Government in the same sense, and Sir Henry Elliot had been empowered to make a similar appeal to Montenegro. The advice given by the Foreign Office to Turkey was to put down the insurrection as soon as possible, and not on any account to give it international importance by appealing to other Powers. The Porte was too weak and too much frightened to act on this shrewd recommendation, and when the other Powers proposed to send their Consuls to the disturbed districts to get from the insurgents a statement of their complaints, it begged the British Government to join in the delegation. Lord Derby consented "with reluctance," still thinking that "the Porte should have dealt with the insurgents without foreign intervention."* The Consuls went with armfuls of Turkish promises which the insurgents refused to accept unless they were accompanied by European guarantees. On their way back they met the Turkish troops hurrying to attack the insurgents who had assembled at their request, and Consul Holmes reported the indignation he and his colleagues felt at this act of treachery. All the Consuls reported favourably of the insurgents and represented their demands as moderate and just.

Our own Government took no further steps in this matter, but the other Governments did. The Turks

* "Turkey," II., 1876, No. 16.

made loud promises of reforms, and Lord Derby seemed to believe in them. Speaking at Liverpool on the 7th of October he said: "I don't think we shall hear much more of the armed insurrection. As for the steps which may be taken to prevent another outbreak, by the removal of grievances, I do not apprehend that there will be any reluctance on the part of the Porte to grant considerable administrative reforms. . . . The state of things does not admit of radical cure, but alleviation is possible, and the rest may be left to time." A month later Mr. Disraeli was speaking at the Guildhall banquet, and the Lord Mayor and his guests heard from him much more of the armed insurrection. Mr. Disraeli told his audience that the insurrection was about to cease a month ago, when "the financial catastrophe of one of our allies revived the expiring struggle, and created hopes and fears in quarters and in circles in which they did not before exist." This connection between the persistence of the insurrection and the Turkish collapse existed only in Mr. Disraeli's imagination. It was invented as an apology for the blunder the Government had made in allowing the wish that the Herzegovinians should be defeated to become father to the thought that their defeat was imminent.

It was quite evident even at this early period that both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary saw the gravity of the crisis in the East, and it was equally evident that a radical difference of opinion existed between them as to the way in which it should be met. Lord Derby took the traditional view of

English policy in the East. His whole attitude towards the questions which the condition of the Turkish populations suggested was that of the proverb, "Let sleeping dogs lie." Hence his advice to the Porte to put down the insurrection as soon as possible and not to make it a European interest by any appeal to the other Powers. They were only too ready to interpose, and the one purpose of Lord Derby's policy was to take away from them all opportunity for interposition. Communications on the subject were already taking place between the three Emperors, and Lord Derby in his Liverpool speech had made a striking reference to them. Speaking of British interests in the East, he said, "We want nothing, and we fear nothing. We have no frontiers to rectify. We can't be invaded, and we have no aggressive designs. Our one great interest is the maintenance of peace, and our advice when we give it is known to be disinterested and sincere. I know there are persons in the present day who laugh at the notion of moral influence in public affairs and regard material strength as the sole element of international power. I object to that view, not because it is cynical as people sometimes say, but because it is inaccurate. You cannot in public any more than in private, do violent and aggressive acts without inspiring distrust, and to inspire distrust is a source of weakness." This striking passage was thought at the time to indicate the policy which the Government was likely to follow; but it was, in fact, a declaration of the opinion of the Foreign Secretary in opposition to that of the Prime

Minister. It is a warning, by anticipation, against nearly all that the Government did after it had succeeded in shaking itself free from the influence of Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon. Mr. Disraeli took up the challenge thus thrown down, and in his Guildhall speech made an indirect reply to it. Speaking of the state of the East he said, "I have myself not only a trust but a conviction that means will be ascertained which will bring about a satisfactory result, one which will be consistent with the maintenance of peace, and which will be satisfactory to the public opinion of Europe. My Lord Mayor, I will not contemplate any other result, and therefore I only say that the interests which the Imperial Powers have in these questions, no doubt are more direct than those of Great Britain, but though more direct they are not more considerable, and those to whom the conduct of affairs is now entrusted are deeply conscious of the nature and magnitude of those British interests, and those British interests they are resolved to guard and to maintain." The concluding portions of the speech were more pacific in tone, but the speech was probably intended to warn all whom it might concern that the Prime Minister did not agree with the Foreign Secretary in the statement that the one great British interest was the maintenance of peace.

Meanwhile national aspirations in the East refused to wait upon the wishes of statesmen in the West. The insurrection spread. The Turkish Government met the growing discontent with paper promises,

which none but English officials believed in or would trust. An Iradé was issued early in October, and communicated at once to Lord Derby, for whom it was principally intended. In December an Imperial Firman was issued promising further reforms, and on the 29th, the very day before that on which the Andrassy Note was dated, Musurus Pacha called on Lord Derby to assure him that "the edifice of which the foundation was laid by the Firman of Gulhane in 1839, and the body completed by the Hatti-Humayoun of 1856, was now crowned and made perfect."* The world had heard before, during the Imperialist obscuration of French intellect and freedom, of this crowning of an edifice of shams by a pretence more pretentious than the rest, and the new Firman deceived nobody. Meanwhile the Imperial Powers to whom Mr. Disraeli had spoken defiantly in his Guildhall speech had been in communication, and the Andrassy Note was the result. In this Note, Austria, Germany and Russia joined in declaring that none of the promises of reform made by the Porte had ever been carried into effect, and that the new Firman was no more likely to be acted on than those that had gone before it. The three Governments therefore urged collective action by the Powers of Europe to insist on the carrying out of the reforms which the Note specified. With a directness unusual in diplomatic documents, this important Note declared that the Governments of Servia and Montenegro would be compelled by the sympathy of their popula-

* "Turkey," II., 1876, No. 52.

tions to join the insurrection in the spring, that the only chance of avoiding such complications was "in a manifesto emanating from the Powers, making clear their firm resolution to arrest the movement which threatens to involve the East," and that for this purpose it was not enough that mere pledges should be repeated, "the Powers must be able to appeal to acts—clear, indisputable, practical—in one word, that their action may be grounded on facts, not on programmes."

This Note was dated at Buda-Pest, on the 30th of December, and was immediately communicated to the Powers which had signed the Treaties of 1856. France and Italy at once agreed with it, England hesitated. For three weeks Lord Derby held out. The Note had been received by the British Government on the 3rd of January, and on the 14th Lord Derby received a despatch from Sir Henry Elliot expressing the desire of the Porte that the English Government should join in the Note, "unless it should prove altogether objectionable." It was not, however, till the Austrian Ambassador had told Lord Derby that the other five Powers had resolved to present the Note and to obtain from the Porte a written engagement to carry it out, that a despatch directing him to give it "a general support" was sent to Sir Henry Elliot. The Porte at once accepted four out of the five points urged, and sent out another Imperial Iradé to give them effect. This was all that the Government at Constantinople did. Six weeks after the issue of this document Sir Henry

Elliot informed Lord Derby with regret "that while the professions of the Government have been of a determination to raise the administration of justice, its measures seem calculated to farther debase it."* Similar testimony was sent home by Consul Holmest† and by Mr. Monson, our Consul at Ragusa.‡ The British Government had not cared about the Note, and consequently did not care about this complete frustration of the objects at which it aimed.

The other Governments were less disposed to accept a snubbing. On the 4th of May Count Schouvaloff called on Lord Derby and, after fully explaining the views of his Government, announced that the three Imperial Chancellors would meet forthwith at Berlin, to consider what further step should be proposed to Europe. Lord Derby made no objection to the proposed meeting, only suggesting that it was early as yet to despair of the success of the Andrassy Note, and entirely concurring in Count Schouvaloff's expression of hope that all the six Powers would agree in any course of further action which might be taken.§ Lord Odo Russell, our Ambassador at Berlin, was asked to meet with the representatives of the other five Powers at Berlin, and did so, giving Lord Derby a full account of the interview in a despatch || enclosing the Berlin Memorandum, which had been submitted to the meeting. On the very same day a despatch from Lord Augustus Loftus

* Despatch of 28th of March, "Turkey," II., No. 108.

† Despatch of 30th of March, "Turkey," II., No. 120.

‡ Despatch of 1st of April, "Turkey," III., No. 119.

§ "Turkey," III., No. 218. || Id., No. 248.

reached the Foreign Office, in which our Ambassador at St. Petersburg expressed his conviction "that the predominant wish of the Emperor Alexander is to maintain peace."* In the same despatch he reported that Prince Gortschakoff had declared that if this last effort at pacification were frustrated, Servia and Montenegro could no longer be restrained from rushing into the fray, and that if this intervention took place, "the insurrection would assume much larger proportions, and a flame would be kindled in Bulgaria, Epirus, Thessaly, and Albania, which the Porte with its weakened resources would be unable to extinguish, and the Christian Powers of Europe, awakened by public opinion to the call of humanity, would have to interpose to prevent the effusion of blood." Simultaneously with the receipt of this communication Lord Derby was informed† that France and Italy had agreed to give their support to the proposals set forth in the Memorandum.

The Berlin Memorandum was a sequel to the Andrassy Note. The Andrassy Note was a history and an argument; the Berlin Memorandum was a reminder and a warning. The Powers set forth in the Note their full view of the situation in Turkey, in the Memorandum they pointed out the increasing dangers of anarchy, the necessity for at once carrying out the pledges which the Note had evoked, and the immediate steps they thought to be needful in order to put a stop to the insurrection which threatened the peace of all the East. These steps were, first, a

* "Turkey," III., No. 250.

† *Id.*, No. 261.

suspension of arms for two months, and, secondly, the negotiation of a peace. Meanwhile materials were to be supplied to the returning refugees for the rebuilding of their churches and houses, and for their support during the work; a mixed Commission was to be appointed, under the superintendence of a Herzegovinian Christian, to distribute this help; the Turkish troops were meanwhile to be concentrated at certain points, to be fixed; Christians, like Mussulmans, were to keep their arms, and the Consuls and Delegates of the Powers were to watch over the carrying out of the promised reforms, and the restoration of the people to their homes. The Memorandum concluded by saying that if the period of the proposed armistice were allowed to pass without the ends suggested being attained, the diplomatic action of the Powers must be supplemented by an agreement "in view of efficacious measures which may be called for in the interest of general peace to arrest the evil and prevent its development."*

Nobody suspected at the time that this Memorandum was already out of date when Lord Derby was hesitating whether to join in it or not. While he was meditating upon his course, the insurrection had spread to Bulgaria, and had been suppressed with a sanguinary violence and horror which have no parallel in modern times. On the 15th of May the Foreign Secretary stated to the German and Russian Ambassadors his difficulties about accepting the Memorandum.† These difficulties look like cavils as they

* "Turkey," III., Inclosure in No. 248.

† Id., No. 259.

are read in the light of succeeding events ; but they were not the real reasons for his hesitation. Lord Derby suspected, what most Englishmen believed, that the three Emperors were not sincere in demanding reforms from the Turks, but that, on the contrary, the three Imperial Courts were only feeling their way to a redistribution of Turkish territory on which they had already resolved. The Duke of Argyll suggests* that this suspicion is the only excuse for the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, but he thinks Count Andrassy's language with respect to Montenegro proves that "Austria did not wish to disturb the territorial *status quo*."† In his very able and not unsuccessful apology for Lord Derby, Mr. T. Wemyss Read maintains that a secret agreement between the three Powers had existed since 1873, and that Lord Derby strongly suspected its existence when he showed such reluctance to follow their lead in May 1876.‡ General Ignatieff was at this moment supreme at Constantinople, and it does not appear that he used his authority to procure the carrying out of the reforms the Andrassy Note had demanded. It was even believed by many that Russia was secretly stimulating the discontent which the three Emperors were using as an argument. Lord Derby's refusal to join in the Berlin Memorandum was consequently generally approved at the time, though on looking back it must be pronounced to be a mistake. All that can be said

* "Eastern Question," Vol. I., p. 187.

† Id., p. 188.

‡ *Macmillan's Magazine* for June, 1879. "Lord Derby at the Foreign Office."

for it is that it is a mistake which almost any statesman might have made, if, at that critical moment, he had stood in Lord Derby's place.

The refusal was communicated to the Porte at the same time as to the other Powers. It was received in Constantinople with undisguised satisfaction, at the other capitals it produced unfeigned consternation. Lord Odo Russell wrote that Prince Bismarck felt great regret and had expressed the hope that England would do nothing to "encourage the resistance of the Turkish Government to their combined efforts." * The Duke Decazes expressed through Mr. Adams, the Secretary to our Embassy in Paris, the surprise and grief of the French Cabinet, and "implored Her Majesty's Government to reconsider their decision," as the holding aloof of England "at this momentous crisis would be a public calamity." † Sir A. B. Paget communicated the regret of the Italian Ministry, and Count Andrassy urgently warned Lord Derby of the danger there was in allowing the Turks to believe that they had the support of England in rejecting the Memorandum. The Duke Decazes appealed once more to our Foreign Office. Prince Bismarck invited suggestions as to any changes Lord Derby might desire in the Memorandum, and expressed his willingness to entertain any suggestions for its improvement. Meanwhile the German and Russian Ambassadors hinted to Lord Derby their suspicion that the Berlin proposals had been made known to Turkey

* "Turkey," III., No. 286.

† Id., No. 292.

through England, that the Porte had received an inkling of the Correspondence, though it had not been presented to Parliament; and that the Sultan had been encouraged to resist the pressure put upon him. Lord Derby in reply told the Ambassadors that the Porte ought to know of their designs, and he admitted and defended his communication of them to Constantinople. Whether Lord Derby intended it or not, the result of this frankness towards the Porte was that it was encouraged in its resistance to reforms by the conviction that England would not allow the interference needful to enforce them; and that the Berlin Memorandum was rejected before it was communicated, and was in the end never presented to the Porte at all.

The public at home knew nothing all this time of what the Government was doing. At the opening of Parliament on the 8th of February, Lord Derby explained his reasons for joining in the Andrassy Note. He justified this interference by declaring that if we abstained from interfering other Powers would not do so, as those Powers, "in their own interests, are not inclined to allow of a wide-spread agitation among the Slavonic races, having for its object the creation of a powerful Slave State."* He thought that "a war between the Mahomedan and Christian races of Turkey would be a great evil to the world and possibly a great danger to ourselves," and he held that "if, without too deeply compromising ourselves, we can stave off that event, we should have

* Hansard, Vol. 227, cols. 39, 40.

done a good work for ourselves, for Turkey, and for civilization." Here we have the key to Lord Derby's policy. It was a policy of staving off. The condition of the Turkish Empire was not to be too minutely inquired into lest it should prove to be no longer possible to let matters alone. We were not to interfere ourselves and we were to do all we could to minimize the interference of others. The less said in Parliament or the Press the better for this policy. There was a short debate in the House of Lords on the 6th of March, in which Lord Derby expressed the opinion that the Turkish Empire was stronger than people generally thought, and repeated that it was not our interest or the interest of the world that a war of religion should break out between its Christian and Mahommedan population. The subject was not again mentioned in Parliament till the Berlin Memorandum had been rejected. Lord Derby told the House of Lords on the 22nd of May, in answer to Lord Granville, that he could not explain the reasons of the Government for rejecting the Berlin Memorandum, without at the same time stating what the proposals of the Memorandum were, which he could not do. At the same time Lord Derby, with the honesty which distinguished him among his colleagues, assured the House that "in taking that view we were not in any degree influenced by a motive which I have seen imputed to us, namely, that we had not been consulted in framing the document to which our consent was asked." This was the motive which had been imputed to the Ministers by the whole Minis-

terial Press, and on the strength of which the public had been congratulated on the spirited nature of the Ministerial policy.

The Foreign Minister meanwhile knew a great deal more than the public as to the growing necessity for some interference in Turkish affairs. The public knew only of events which could not be concealed. On the 6th of May there was a fanatical outbreak at Salonica, and the French and German Consuls were murdered. They had interfered, most indiscreetly, in the matter of a young Greek girl's conversion, and the impression in quarters favourable to the Turks was that the Consuls had brought the calamity on themselves. Their murder was avenged, but meanwhile a thrill of terror had run through the unarmed Christian population of the Empire at the threatening aspect of their armed Mahommedan neighbours. The ferment in Constantinople itself alarmed Sir Henry Elliot and the other European representatives, and on the 28th of May the British Squadron in the Mediterranean was sent, at their urgent request, to Besika Bay. The Softas, or Mahommedan students of the mosques, had made a revolutionary demonstration demanding reforms. The Sultan yielded so far as to dismiss his Grand Vizier Mahmoud, and to appoint Mehemed Rudshi in his place; but he refused to grant the reforms the new Minister suggested. The Sultan, Abdul Aziz, was therefore dethroned and his nephew Murad installed in his place. The suicide of the dethroned Sultan and the assassination of two of the Ministers by a fanatic speedily followed, and after a

short reign of three months Murad was, in his turn, dethroned and Abdul Hamid, his brother, reigned in his stead.

While the earliest of these events were occupying the attention of Europe, the most dreadful tragedy of modern times was being enacted in the unseen interior of European Turkey. With the object of preventing the interference of the Powers in Turkish affairs, Lord Derby had been urging the Porte to put down the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its own forces, and he knew not with what frightful energy his advice had been acted on. On the 4th of May Sir Henry Elliot reported a rising in Bulgaria, and on the 7th he wrote that he was unable to give more than the vague information he had obtained from some of his diplomatic colleagues. He added, "About 5,000 troops have been despatched from here; and I believe that no exertion should be spared for assuring the immediate suppression of a movement which, if allowed to spread, will become extremely serious."* Two days later, when Achmet Aga, and Hafiz Pacha, and Chefket Pacha were hovering over their prey, he wrote expressing his fear that the insurgents would commit outrages "on peaceful Mussulmans, especially upon the women and children."† On the 14th of May, when the massacres had just been accomplished, the Turkish Ambassador called on Lord Derby and said that the troubles in Bulgaria had been magnified by malevolence into an insurrection, that the Government had taken "energetic and effectual measures

* "Turkey," III., 1876, No. 254.

† Id., No. 255.

suitable to the occasion,"* and that the disturbances tended to subside. Two days before this our Ambassador at Constantinople had received from Vice-Consul Dupuis, at Adrianople, a statement that created a little uneasiness in his mind. The Consul wrote that his dragoman at the town of Eski Zogra had reported that the Governor was arming the Mussulmans and enlisting notorious brigands and criminals; that Bashi-Bazouks and other volunteers were being enrolled, and "batches of Turkish peasantry are continually arriving from the surrounding villages, to be supplied with arms and ammunition." Other accounts of the same kind came in, and Sir Henry Elliot mildly remonstrated with the Turkish Ministers and received the reply that the matter was now in the hands of the military commanders. On the 8th of June he wrote to the Foreign Office that "the Bulgarian insurrection appears to be unquestionably put down, although I regret to say with cruelty and in some cases with brutality."†

It was in the very midst of these transactions, and while these hints of monstrous cruelties were coming in, that the Berlin Memorandum was rejected, and the despatch of the 19th of May was written, in which Lord Derby told Sir Henry Elliot that "Her Majesty's Government cannot conceal from themselves that the gravity of the situation has arisen in great measure from the weakness and apathy of the Porte, in dealing with the insurrection in its earlier stages."‡ The Government was badly served by its own

* "Turkey," III., 1876, No. 258. † Id., No. 443. ‡ Id., No. 278.

agents, who saw everything through Turkish eyes and reported everything with a Turkish bias. At Constantinople, however, the truth was known. On the 23rd of June the *Daily News* published a letter from its Constantinople correspondent which began with these words, "Dark rumours have been whispered about Constantinople during the last month, of horrible atrocities committed in Bulgaria. The local newspapers have given mysterious hints about correspondence from the interior which they have been obliged to suppress. I have hitherto refrained from mentioning these rumours or from stating what I have heard, but they are now gradually assuming definiteness and consistency, and cruelties are being committed which place those committed in Herzegovina and Bosnia altogether in the background." The letter, which had been written in Constantinople on the 16th of June, then gave the names of thirty-seven villages which had been destroyed; with a circumstantial account of the burning of a party of Bulgarian girls, and the killing of a hundred more in a village school. An account of the sack of the village of Perushtitsa, by the troops under Raschid Pacha, was given from a trustworthy eyewitness.

This striking letter arrested public attention at once. It was followed up by others in which the story was continued on the evidence of eyewitnesses, and statements were made which recalled to the minds of Englishmen the stories of those ancient conquerors who made a solitude and called it peace. On the 26th of June the Duke of Argyll called the attention of

the House of Lords to the first letter, and drew from Lord Derby the expression of a belief that the accounts were exaggerated, and a promise to "make further inquiry from our Minister at Constantinople."* In the House of Commons Mr. W. E. Forster not only called the attention of the Government to the letter, but said he had since received information, "not from the office of the *Daily News*, but from a quarter which is certainly not prejudiced against the Turkish Government," which confirmed "the substantial truth of these distressing statements." Mr. Disraeli replied that the Government had no information which justified the statements referred to. In a jaunty manner Mr. Disraeli went on to tell the House that some time ago the Bulgarian troubles began by "strangers entering the country and burning the villages without reference to religion or race. The Turkish Government at that time had no regular troops in Bulgaria, and the inhabitants, of course, were obliged to defend themselves. The persons who are called Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, are persons who had settled in the country and had a stake in it. I have not the slightest doubt myself that the war between the invaders and the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, was carried on with great ferocity. One can easily understand, under the circumstances under which these outrages occurred, and with such populations, that that might happen. I am told no quarter was given, and no doubt scenes took place which we must all entirely deplore."†

* Hansard, Vol. 230, col. 387. † Id., col. 425.

This astounding speech, which was received with laughter all over Europe, and produced the suspicion that Mr. Disraeli was mocking the ignorance of his own supporters, was understood by the Porte. It told the Turkish Pachas that the Prime Minister of England was prepared to support them in whatever they did, even to the extent of calling the Bulgarian people invaders and the Turkish Irregulars the settled inhabitants of the country, "with a stake in it." A fortnight later, on the 10th of July, Mr. Forster once more asked Mr. Disraeli about the massacres. Mr. Disraeli answered that there had not been time to receive further information, but he hoped the reports were exaggerated; and as to the rumour that 10,000 persons had been imprisoned, "I doubt," he said, "whether there is prison accommodation for so many, or that torture has been practised on a great scale among an Oriental people who seldom, I believe, resort to torture, but generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner."* This reply raised a loud laugh from the Ministerial benches, but called forth from the other side angry remonstrance and debate. Mr. Forster moved the adjournment of the House and pointed out the numberless confirmations these horrible stories had received. Mr. Mundella declared that he had heard from private sources of facts so horrible that they could not be cited by an English newspaper, and Sir Edward Watkin urged that an official inquiry should be made about them. Mr. Disraeli explained that he had never denied that

* Hansard, Vol. 230, col. 1182.

there had been atrocities in Bulgaria, but that he had received no particulars, and with this apologetic reply the subject dropped.

The Government knew more than Mr. Disraeli would admit. About the middle of June Sir Henry Elliot had remonstrated with the Grand Vizier on the cruelties in Bulgaria, and had received the frank confession that the emergency had been so great as to render it indispensable at once to stamp out the movement by any means that were immediately available.* Lord Derby had consequently made the inquiries which the Prime Minister, out of consideration for his pro-Turkish supporters, refused to promise. He had sent to Sir Henry Elliot the letters of the *Daily News*' correspondent a few days after they appeared, and on the 14th of July telegraphed to Constantinople to tell Sir Henry Elliot to inquire of the Consuls, and to Vice-Consul Dupuis to go himself to Philippopolis and Tatar Bazardjik, to inquire into the real character of these events. The Duke of Argyll thinks this action was the result of a deputation which had gone to the Foreign Office on the same day, and had given "the earliest symptom of strong popular emotion." On the 17th of July Mr. Disraeli made an explanation† in the House of Commons, in which he read some apologetic letters from Sir Henry Elliot, the substance of which was that the Turkish Ministers had denied the atrocities, and "a Bulgarian" had declared that as far as the conduct

* See the Duke of Argyll's "Eastern Question," Vol. I., pp. 219-230.

† Hansard, Vol. 230, cols. 1486 to 1495.

of the regular troops was concerned he had no complaint to make. "It, however, appears from other sources," said Sir H. Elliot, "that the regular troops have, at other times, been guilty of great excess." Mr. Disraeli concluded by announcing that the Consul at Adrianople had been ordered to repair to the scenes of the outrages and inquire into them.

While the Government had been determining upon this inquiry, the managers of the *Daily News* had instituted one of their own. Mr. J. A. MacGahan, who had been one of the Special Correspondents of that journal during the Franco-German War, and on whose energy and ability there was every reason to rely, was commissioned to go to the disturbed districts and report what he saw and heard. Mr. MacGahan was accompanied by Mr. Eugene Schuyler, the American Consul-General in Turkey, and he arrived at Philippopolis on the 25th of July. He found there the representative of the Foreign Office, Mr. Baring, who had started from Constantinople on the 19th of July, and who had already begun a careful and conscientious inquiry. Mr. MacGahan spent a month in going through the desolated districts, and in seven letters to the *Daily News* gave an account of his journey. His observations more than confirmed the first reports. So harrowing and revolting were the details, that the Ministerial organs, which imitated Mr. Disraeli in speaking of "alleged atrocities," denounced the *Daily News* for publishing them, and the *Standard* in a leading article on the 31st of August said that the "enterprise of searching out and dwelling upon

atrocities has itself become an atrocity of a most disgusting kind.” This expression probably represented the views of that section of the Ministerial party which cheered and laughed when Mr. Disraeli made his unfortunate speech about the expeditious way in which the Eastern people “terminated their connection” with their victims. They had cheered again on the 31st of July, when, in a debate raised by Mr. Bruce on the state of Turkey, Mr. Disraeli spoke of the “atrocities alleged to have been committed in consequence of the invasion of Bulgaria,” and, speaking of the wild work of the Bashi-Bazouks, reported to Consul Reade from the statements of a Turk who had been in the district during the whole rising, said he was “not justified for a moment in adopting that coffee-house babble brought by an anonymous Bulgarian to a Consul, as at all furnishing a basis of belief that the accounts subsequently received had any justification.” * Mr. MacGahan’s letters were, however, read all over the world, and confirmation of his statements poured in on all hands. On the 7th of August Mr. Anderson read in the House of Commons his harrowing description of the horrors he had seen at Batak, and Mr. Mundella gave confirmatory evidence from other sources.† Mr. Baillie Cochrane expressed the feeling still entertained on his side of the House, by accusing them of making “party speeches against the Turkish Government;” but Mr. Bourke read a letter from Mr. Baring, written when he had been two days on the spot, expressing his

* Hansard, Vol. 213, col. 203. † Id., cols. 722 to 746.

disbelief in some rumours of dreadful atrocities but confirming others, and declaring that his present opinion, which he hoped afterwards to be able to modify, was that 12,000 Bulgarians had perished.

On the 11th August, four days before Parliament was prorogued, the subject was once more brought before the House of Commons, and a debate was raised which has the striking historical interest that it was concluded by the last speech Mr. Disraeli made to that assembly. Mr. Bourke in the course of the debate had frankly admitted that "the Government really had no idea of the events which had occurred in Bulgaria until attention was called to them in the House," and had thanked "the newspaper correspondents through whom those events had become known."* He was still in the sceptical mood, however, and quoted the *Levant Herald* in contradiction of much that had thus become known. Sir William Harcourt spoke with contempt of this newspaper as an authority, but Mr. Disraeli expressed his belief that the *Levant Herald* was "of considerable authority and distinguished for its authentic information." The whole tone of his speech in winding up the debate was one of complete scepticism as to all the details of the atrocities, though of verbal admission that atrocities had taken place. The Turkish Government was a sinner in the abstract, but not in the concrete, and any sin that was pointed out was indignantly denied. Mr. Disraeli wound up his speech by one of those eloquent expressions of a

* Hansard, Vol. 231, col. 1117.

determination to uphold the Empire, which all former English Ministers have taken for granted as going without saying (to use the French idiom), but which in his own case have been so perpetually reiterated that the nation, for a while, took words for deeds. In presence of three calamitous years of most disastrous policy for the people at home and for the Empire abroad, the concluding words of this oration receive a new and striking significance. "What our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the Empire of England. Nor will we ever agree to any step, though it may obtain for a moment comparative quiet and a false prosperity, that hazards the existence of that Empire."*

It is quite certain that in the years which succeeded this speech the Government did not obtain for a moment even comparative quiet or a false prosperity, and in India, at least, the existence of the Empire was hazarded more than it has been at any period since the Mutiny. Even comparative quiet might have saved the people much; and prosperity which rhetoricians may speak of as "false" is, at least, better than agricultural depression and commercial ruin. When Mr. Disraeli spoke, Englishmen were not thinking about themselves; they were filled with noble pity for an oppressed and down-trodden people. In the terrible tales of licensed slaughter and unbridled passion which they were reading every week, they recognized a call to help, and Mr. Disraeli's words were regarded as a declaration that the one

* Hansard, Vol. 231, cols. 1146, 1147.

thing Englishmen had to do was to take care of themselves. The national sympathy with the oppressed which made Cromwell interfere on behalf of the Waldenses, whose moans, as Milton said—

“The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven,”—

which made our grandfathers volunteer to fight for liberty in Spain, and our fathers watch with lively sympathy the birth-struggles of modern Greece, had been quickened into sudden activity with respect to the Christian races of Eastern Europe, and when the Prime Minister uttered these last ignoble words in the House of Commons, a movement of the national mind had already begun which was destined to disappoint the calculations of selfish statesmanship, to defeat the combinations of a timid diplomacy, and to effect a permanent, and in the long run, a salutary change in our whole relation to Turkey and the East of Europe.

CHAPTER X.

DOMESTIC CONCERNS.

THE domestic politics of 1876 were not entirely overshadowed by Foreign and Colonial difficulties. The Session was opened on the 8th of February by the Queen in person, and the Speech, which dealt principally with the external relations of the kingdom, announced the purchase of the Canal Shares, the issue of a Royal Commission on the Fugitive Slave Question, the proposal of a formal addition to the style and titles of the Sovereign, and the diplomatic proceedings in Turkey, in China, in the Colonies and in the Malay Peninsula. The list of domestic Bills was briefer than in the previous year. The measures foreshadowed were those for the completion of the ultimate Tribunal of Appeal; for the amendment of the Merchant Shipping Laws; for carrying out the recommendations of the Universities Commission, and for amending the Inclosure Acts. A Prisons Bill and a Bill relating to Primary Education completed the list.

The first topics of debate were those which had arisen during the recess. On the Eastern Question but little was said. The Queen's Speech had announced the adhesion of the Government to the

Andrassy Note, and that adhesion received general approval, Lord Granville in the Lords, and Lord Hartington in the Commons, contenting themselves with asking a few questions about it; and Mr. Gladstone, after pointing out that non-interference on behalf of the Christians of Turkey was inconsistent with the policy of the Crimean War, expressed himself grateful that the Government had given their support to the Austrian Note. The discussion on the purchase of the Canal Shares was, necessarily, limited to criticism on a step which was beyond recall. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made an elaborate statement, in which he justified the purchase chiefly on the ground that it was a good investment. Mr. Lowe endeavoured to account for the favour with which the first announcement of the transaction was received by the Press, and in doing so almost stumbled into prophecy. He failed to see that ever since the Canal was opened Englishmen had been ashamed of the opposition which Lord Palmerston had offered it in their name; and that Mr. Disraeli's sudden step met with enthusiastic approval, simply because it reversed the attitude of England, and was a practical acknowledgment of the international value of one of the great engineering triumphs of the age. Mr. Lowe, however, thought that the newspapers had welcomed it, "because they believed that a spirited policy was at hand," and because they thought that "what we were doing in Egypt would ultimately lead to establishing a Protectorate, and to placing us in very stirring and exciting circumstances, which

would be exceedingly agreeable to all the readers of the daily and weekly Press.”* The “spirited policy” was at hand; and Mr. Lowe was right in thinking that an Egyptian Protectorate would have been exceedingly agreeable to the majority of Englishmen. It would have been agreeable, however, not because it would have given exciting interest to the daily papers, but because it would have safeguarded British interests and kept us out of the miserable complications further East. The “spirited policy” took a wrong turn at this critical moment of its inception. It missed the opportunity of establishing a direct British Protectorate over Egypt by vaguely assuming an indirect British Protectorate over Constantinople. If our Government had got firm hold of Egypt in 1876, they might have left Turkey to its fate. But Mr. Disraeli was dreaming of Cyprus and Asia Minor and the Euphrates Valley, and could not see the full extent of England’s interest in Egypt. The public expectation as to the result of the buying of the Canal Shares has been utterly disappointed. It remains an investment and nothing more. It gives us no more political influence than the buying of four millions of any other shares would bestow; and instead of being predominant in Egypt, as we might have been by the tacit consent of Europe, we have roused the susceptibilities of France, and been made to dance attendance on her policy instead of carrying out our own.

The Government fared worse in the debate on the

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 568.

Slave Circulars than in the argument on the Suez Canal. Mr. Whitbread moved a resolution asserting that slaves on British ships should be regarded as free and not be removable on the ground of slavery, and cancelling all the Circulars, Instructions or Orders which were inconsistent with this principle. The debate had been shorn of much of its interest by the concessions which the Government had made during the recess. The Attorney-General and Mr. Hardy made a laboured defence of the Circulars, but abandoned them nevertheless. Mr. Hanbury was put up with an amendment declaring that "in order to maintain most effectually the right of personal liberty" it was desirable, not to affirm that right at once as Mr. Whitbread proposed, but to await further information from the Report of the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission was in fact intended to cover the Ministerial retreat, and the only question was whether the retreat should be effected in order or as a flight. The speakers on the Government side contradicted the popular view that English ships in foreign ports were still floating parts of the British soil and under English law alone; but they took this unfortunate position in argument only, and to cover their retreat from a defeated attempt at its practical application. The Liberal party on the other hand took the popular view, and wished to reassert it at once without waiting for further information. They had the nation with them in this more spirited policy, and even the House of Commons supported the Ministry only by a diminished majority. Mr. Hanbury's amendment

was carried, after two nights' debate, by 293 against 248, a Ministerial majority of 45.

The storm raised by Mr. Plimsoll at the close of last Session had not been laid by the hasty measure then passed. During the recess there had been much agitation in the seaport towns on the questions of Marine Insurance, Load-lines, and Deck-loading; and Sir Charles Adderley had been much pressed, both by shipowners on one side and by Mr. Plimsoll on the other, with respect to his forthcoming measure. On the first Government night of the Session, the Maritime Contracts Bill was introduced, with fuller explanations than are usual on a first reading, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the Merchant Shipping Bill by the President of the Board of Trade. The first of these Bills, which Sir Stafford Northcote described as giving "the sanction of an Act of Parliament to proper principles," was scarcely heard of again. It never came on for Second Reading and was withdrawn early in July. The Merchant Shipping Bill bore traces of indecision. It left the load-line to be marked at the owner's discretion, and discouraged deck cargoes only by including them in the tonnage measurement. Mr. Plimsoll, who had brought in a Bill of his own on the second day of the Session, proceeded no farther with it, but concentrated his efforts on the amendment of the Government measure in Committee. The Act, as it eventually passed, went considerably farther than Sir Charles Adderley and his colleagues intended, though not so far as Mr. Plimsoll and his chief supporters desired.

It was a compromise, which left sailors still liable to imprisonment for breach of contract, and made "the Plimsoll line," as it is called, represent the owner's view of the depth to which his ship may be safely loaded; but, on the whole, the Act has remedied many of the evils which Mr. Plimsoll exposed, and has greatly added to the security of life at sea.

The Commons Bill was introduced by Mr. Cross on the same evening as the Merchant Shipping Bill. The Home Secretary made a most liberal speech, with which the measure was afterwards found scarcely to correspond. Legislation on this subject had been attempted by the late Government, but the House of Lords threw out the Bill. Pending some settlement, the House of Commons refused to sanction any schemes of the Inclosure Commissioners, and the inclosure of Commons had been practically suspended for half a dozen years. Mr. Cross described his Bill as having for its object the prevention of inclosures, as far as possible; and he told a deputation of Agricultural Labourers that its practical effect would be to put a stop to inclosures; it had in fact, he said, been drawn with that object. But Mr. Shaw Lefevre and Mr. Fawcett pointed out that its first practical effect would be to set the arrested work of inclosure going again. This has been the effect of the Act, though it differs in many important particulars from the original Bill. Its main feature, however, is the provision for the regulation of such Commons as may be made available for the health or recreation of the public. The Bill of the late Government pro-

posed to forbid inclosures within certain distances of large towns; Mr. Cross refused to do this, but consented to allow local authorities to make arrangements with the Inclosure Commissioners for the preservation of Commons or parts of Commons within six miles of their boroughs. Mr. Lefevre, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. P. Ralli, and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, fought the battle of the poor with some successes and many defeats; and Mr. Cowper Temple, Lord Henry Scott, and Sir Henry Peek, all helped to liberalize the scheme. Had Mr. Cross been so disposed he might have passed through the House of Commons a more complete and more satisfactory measure; but probably the Act, as it stands, is as fully favourable to the public right over common land as the House of Lords would permit it to be.

(Mr. Disraeli introduced the Royal Titles Bill on the 17th of February. He did so in a short speech, delivered in his most impressive manner. The Bill consisted of but one clause, enabling the Queen, by Proclamation, "to make that addition to her style and title which befits the occasion." The occasion was the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, an enterprise, Mr. Disraeli said, in which "his demeanour and his conduct have been such that he has proved that it is not his birth only which qualifies him for an Imperial Post."* The word Imperial thus used was the only hint thrown out as to what the new title was to be. A short debate followed, in which Mr. Lowe drew a forcible contrast between the associ-

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 409.

ations which have gathered around the title of King and those which have degraded that of Emperor, and asked why the Queen of England should not assume the title of Queen of India. Mr. Forster expressed a similar preference for the old title of King or Queen, and deprecated the ideas of personal government which gather around that of Emperor or Empress. Mr. Bright joined in asking that the title proposed to be adopted should be stated to the House, and Mr. Disraeli took a first step in personal government by declaring that it would be an invasion of the prerogative of the Crown to define beforehand what the new title should be. A question to the same effect as Mr. Bright's, which was put by Mr. Samuelson a couple of days before the Second Reading, was denounced by Mr. Disraeli as "unfair and improper."*

(The Bill proved a most unpopular one. It was almost universally disliked by the Press, and it created a strong movement of opposition in the country.) Mr. Disraeli had called the Queen "Empress of India" in his novel, "Tancred"; in "Sybil" he had spoken harshly of Sir Robert Peel for having "commenced his career as Minister under Victoria by an unseemly contrariety to the personal wishes of the Queen;" in "Coningsby" he had said that "the Ministers of the Crown are responsible to their Master; they are not the Ministers of Parliament;" and in his language on the Royal Titles Bill there was an echo of these unconstitutional declarations. It is too early as yet to discuss the origin of this measure. That it repre-

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 1719.

sented the wish of the Queen herself may be taken for granted; but the exact connection between the rise of that wish in the Queen's mind and the bringing of an Imperial Princess to the English Court, will only be traced when some future volume like those of Mr. Theodore Martin comes to be written. (It was the misfortune of the Queen at this moment that her chief adviser was an ^{servile} obsequious Minister, whose love of great titles was almost Eastern in its adulation, and whose one political idea was the splendour and power of the Throne.) With a Melbourne, a Palmerston, a Derby, or a Russell in power, the Royal Titles Bill would have been as impossible as with Mr. Gladstone; but with Mr. Disraeli and his personal majority, it was easy to force it on a reluctant Parliament and an unwilling people. It was generally believed at the time that the intention was to mingle the Royal and Imperial Titles in the ordinary descriptions of the Queen. If this intention ever existed it was frustrated by the watchfulness of the Opposition, and the constitutional loyalty of the people. The new title was adopted, but it was limited to external use.

In proposing the Second Reading Mr. Disraeli made an elaborate reply to the arguments urged against the change, announced that the proposed title was to be "Empress of India;" and pledged the Government not to advise the use of the Imperial style under any circumstances at home. The real test of Parliamentary feeling came on the motion to go into Committee, when Lord Hartington moved a

resolution expressing the willingness of the House of Commons to make an addition to the Royal style and title, but "that it is inexpedient to impair the ancient and royal dignity of the Crown by the assumption of the style and title of Emperor." In the debate on the Second Reading Mr. Gladstone had pointed out that the title of Emperor, wherever it had been given, (had always swallowed up that of King;) and Lord Hartington asked what guarantees we had that this would not now be the case. He pushed home the question which everybody was asking as to the future descriptions of the monarch. "King, Lords and Commons we know, but are we to have King, Emperor, Lords and Commons? How is the Proclamation of Her Majesty in Council to run? Is the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty to become the Queen and Empress's Most Excellent Majesty? Will Proclamations conclude with God Save the Queen, or God Save the Queen and Empress? Is the new title to be introduced into the Book of Common Prayer, and are we to pray for Our Sovereign Lady the Queen and Empress? These may appear small matters, but I think they are not trivial. . . . All these things, whether intended or not, make up an amount of change—a great change, which I say is repugnant to the feelings and wishes of the people of this country." * The Chancellor of the Exchequer in reply laughed at these questions, and said it was impossible to reason with the absurd and unfounded panic which had seized the people with

* Hansard, Vol. 228, col. 84.

respect to this title. Yet the fear that the newfangled title would swallow up the old one was shared even by the most intelligent supporters of the Government. Mr. Forster read parts of a leading article in the *Standard* which pointed out that though "to exchange the title of ten centuries for one of yesterday would be a folly which no English Prince would dream of committing," it might "not be in the power of the Queen or of her successors to prevent first an admixture and then a change. First Anglo-Indians, then grandiloquent journalists, then snobs and simpletons generally, will come by degrees to speak, it may be originally of the Queen-Empress, then of Empress-Queen, and at last of the Empress simply." Even while the debates were going on there were warnings of this, and the Dublin municipal authorities, on the advice, it was stated, of Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King-at-Arms, led the way as soon as the Act was passed. The warning urged by the opponents of the Bill happily caused these first steps to be severely discountenanced. Pledges were exacted during the discussion, that except for diplomatic purposes the new title should be entirely localized in India, and should on no account be otherwise used or recognized at home or abroad. On this pledge the Bill was passed through Committee, Lord Hartington's amendment having been rejected by a majority of 105.

* This Parliamentary majority did not represent the nation. The Bill continued to be opposed by men of all parties, though chiefly by Liberals, who were for the time the true Conservatives. There was conse-

quently a brilliant debate on the Third Reading, in which Mr. Gladstone obtained further pledges from the Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone guarded himself from predicting that any evil would come from the change. "I do not prophesy that evils are certain to arise from the adoption of this measure—I hope they will not arise. What I perceive is that we are making room for them."* The debate was made memorable by a striking speech, in which Mr. Joseph Cowen exhibited remarkable powers of Parliamentary oratory, and the final division showed the Government majority for the Bill to be reduced to 75. In the House of Lords the Duke of Richmond and Gordon repeated the pledges given in the Commons. There was but one division, and it took place on the motion for going into Committee, when Lord Shaftesbury moved to address the Queen to take some other title than that of Empress. In the debate on this motion the Lord Chancellor repeated in most precise words that the new title was "apposite and appropriate to, and only to be used in India."† Lord Shaftesbury was supported by 91 votes, and only 137 were recorded for the Government. On the Third Reading there was no division, but there was a short and important debate.

No understanding was ever clearer than that the new title thus conferred was to be used for India alone. Yet, to the astonishment of the whole country, the Proclamation which was issued on the 1st of May made the non-use of the title in the United

* Hansard, Vol. 228, col. 492.

† Id., Vol. 228, col. 1062.

Kingdom the exception, instead of its use in India. The pledge was that this title was to be used only in India; the Proclamation ordered its use everywhere except in the United Kingdom. The difference is immense, and attention was called to this obvious breach of faith by Lord Selborne in the House of Lords, and by Sir Henry James in the House of Commons. (Lord Hatherley summed up the Lord Chancellor's elaborate apology by saying, "The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has been asked two questions; to the one he has given an insufficient answer, and to the other no answer at all." *) In the House of Commons the Government treated Sir Henry James's motion as a vote of want of confidence. Sir Henry James asked the House to express its opinion that the Proclamation did not "make adequate provision for preventing the use of the title of Empress in relation to the internal affairs of Her Majesty's dominions other than India."—The statement in the resolution was unanswerable; but the Government fell back on the words of the Act, refusing to be bound by the pledges they had given while it was passing. The division was a very large one—Ayes 226, Noes 334. Majority for the Government 108.)

While the hot discussions on this constitutional novelty were proceeding, an old subject of debate gave the Government a good deal of anxiety. The narrow majority of fourteen by which Mr. Osborne Morgan's Burials Bill was rejected in the previous

* Hansard, Vol. 228, col. 1981.

Session, roused both parties to unwonted efforts. Every diocesan conference had discussed the subject during the recess, and the greatest possible pressure had been put on Conservative members to induce them to attend and vote when the subject came on again. Mr. Osborne Morgan moved a resolution on the 3rd of March, which substantially embodied the principle of his measure. The resolution was seconded by Mr. Wykeham Martin, who said that he did so "as a Churchman, strongly opposed to Disestablishment." Mr. Cross in opposing it spoke with studied moderation, and concluded his speech with an implied promise to deal with the question "in a broad, charitable, and statesmanlike spirit, which will not only provide for the interment of the dead, but for the comfort, health and happiness of the living."* The division bore evidence of the strong whip which had taken place on both sides. The resolution was defeated, but the numbers of the minority (248) were exactly the same as the majority in 1875, while the majority had been also increased to 279. The resolution was therefore rejected by a majority of 31.

There were two discussions on the same subject in the House of Lords. Lord Granville moved a resolution on the 15th of May, declaring it to be desirable that the law of burial should be amended so as to allow of burials in churchyards with "such Christian and orderly religious observances" as to the friends of the deceased person might seem fit. The resolution was defeated by a majority of 56—Contents, 92; Not

* Hansard, Vol. 227, col. 1334.

Contents, 148. But both the Archbishops made striking speeches in favour of settlement by the only possible method, that of some generous concession of Nonconformist claims. The Archbishop of Canterbury threw out the suggestion that the singing of hymns should be permitted to Dissenters in the churchyards, the rest of the service being performed in their own places of worship before coming to the burial ground. The Archbishop of York said: "We shall fight the battle against Disestablishment on very bad ground if we have to fight it by the side of the grave."* Neither of the Archbishops voted. The Bishop of Exeter supported Lord Granville, sixteen Bishops were in the minority against him. At the end of the month Earl Grey brought on the Second Reading of his Bill for putting the churchyards into the hands of Burial Boards elected for the purpose. The Bill was not pressed, but the debate further showed the change of feeling on the subject in the House of Lords. Lord Shaftesbury urged the clergy to accept the promise of the Government to deal with the question and be guided by it; and Lord Dynevor, speaking as an incumbent of nearly fifty years' standing, advocated complete concession to Nonconformists of freedom of burial, and declared the present condition of things to be "an open sore, injurious to the Church and religion in this country, and the sooner it is stayed the better."†

The chief measure of the year—perhaps the chief measure of Lord Beaconsfield's Government—was the

* Hansard, Vol. 229, col. 627. † Id., col. 1095.

Education Act. Mr. Dixon had cleared the way for Lord Sandon's proposals by bringing forward his Bill for the establishment of Universal School Boards, which was rejected, after a Wednesday morning's debate, by a majority of 121. Lord Sandon introduced the Government measure on the 18th of May in a very liberal and moderate speech. He began by assuring the House that the Government measure was not in any way intended to reverse the policy of the Act of 1870, on the contrary it was meant to carry out that policy. The Act of 1870 had established the principle that every child was to receive the elements of education; and the Government was determined to carry that principle into full effect. There were schools enough, and wherever, as in the School Board districts, there was compulsion, the schools were being filled, outside those districts they were standing empty. "Everything is there ready except the children to whom we wish to give the benefit of education."* The Agricultural Children Act had never been enforced, and Lord Sandon proposed to repeal it, and to re-enact a new form of compulsion in its stead. Here was the real difficulty of the Government. Its supporters would have preferred to modify the Act of 1870; and Lord Sandon was profusely apologetic for resolving to extend it. They disliked compulsory education in any form; and he had to lead them up to it while seeming to lead them away from it. He did this by playing on their dislike of the School Board system, and by arguing some-

* Hansard, Vol. 231. Appendix, p. v.

what vehemently against direct compulsion. The Government proposal was to attain the same end by indirect means. Starting from the distant year 1881, till which the Government scheme would not come into full operation, he made his supporters feel how little was to be done in 1877. In 1881 no child between ten and fourteen years of age was to be at work, who had not attended school 250 times in each of five previous years, or passed an examination in the Fourth Standard; and no child under ten was to be at work at all. But this rule did not apply in the coming year, it would only be reached by successive steps. "Wastrels," as the old English term was, that is children habitually neglected and found wandering about, were to come under direct compulsion, their parents to be fined for not sending them to school, and they themselves were to be imprisoned in an Industrial School. The Act was to be carried out by Attendance Committees appointed by Town Councils and Boards of Guardians, with powers very much like those of School Boards, except that of maintaining schools. Town Councils might at once adopt bye-laws enforcing direct compulsion in their districts; Boards of Guardians must do so for any parish which directly asked for them. School Boards were let alone or only empowered to fill up vacancies, and nothing was done for "voluntary" schools except the doubling of the Parliamentary grant in poor districts where a threepenny rate did not produce six shillings for each child. A system of honour-passes, giving three years' free teaching, was established. The

honour-pass was to be given where a child of ten years old had both passed the Fourth Standard and received the Certificate of Attendance for five years ; that is to say where it had satisfied both the conditions, either one of which will enable such children to be sent to work at that age.

The Bill was received coldly on the Ministerial benches. It was believed not to be the original measure which Lord Sandon had said would be ready early in the Session. He then said there were two Bills ; and many hints had been thrown out that something was to be done for "religious education," in other words, for the clerical schools. The Bill had not been ready, and it now appeared in one measure instead of two, and did next to nothing for the clergy and their schools but compel the rural Dissenters of the lower classes to send their children to them. Discontent with the Bill broke out on both sides. The Nonconformists protested against being compelled to send their children in rural districts to a clerical, perhaps a ritualist school ; and the clergy and their friends cried out that nothing was being done to strengthen their schools, in the competition with Board Schools in Board School Districts. Lord Sandon's position was thus made a most difficult one. He wanted to satisfy supporters who hated everything connected with the Act of 1870 ;—to whom School rates were insupportable burdens, and enforced School attendance unwarrantable interference, and School Boards anathema—and yet at the same time to extend that Act and complete the

universal education at which it aimed. He did this by never losing an opportunity, as Mr. Bright said, "or rather by taking advantage of many opportunities, of saying something uncivil of the School Boards."* On the whole, however, Lord Sandon resisted with equal success the reactionary proposals from his own side and the progressive and enlarging suggestions of the Opposition. The first great fight arose on Mr. Mundella's resolution declaring that the recommendations as to compulsory Education in the Report of the Factory and Workshops Commission should be embodied in the Bill. Mr. Mundella asked for direct and general compulsion instead of Lord Sandon's roundabout schemes for going to the same end, but was defeated by a large majority. The discussions in Committee effected considerable modifications in the Bill, nearly all of them in the sense of greater directness and efficiency in its operation. One of these amendments, introduced by Lord Sandon himself, was the insertion of a new clause authorizing the establishment of Day Industrial Schools. This proposal had been patiently urged for years by the late Miss Carpenter, who had originated and sustained such a school in Bristol. Lord Sandon truly described this as one of the most important changes which could possibly be introduced, and added that "he did not wish to take to himself or the Government the credit of the scheme itself. The real credit of it belonged to many benevolent people outside the House, and amongst whom he must

* Hansard, Vol. 230, col. 1829.

mention the honoured name of Miss Carpenter, who had tried Industrial Day-schools under disadvantageous circumstances and with marked success.”*

Almost at the last moment the Bill was nearly wrecked by a sudden concession made by the Government to its reactionary supporters. There had been all through the debates murmurs of reaction; and Lord Sandon had resisted almost as many hostile suggestions for retreat from his own side as urgings to go forward from the Opposition. At length the Conservative dislike of School Boards broke out in the proposal by Mr. Pell of two new clauses, the first permitting the dissolution of School Boards which had no schools and no sites, when there was sufficient school accommodation in their districts; and the second providing for such dissolution even where the School Board had property. Late in the evening Lord Sandon announced, to the astonishment of the Opposition, and the great satisfaction of his own supporters, that the Government would take the first of these clauses. This was late on the 20th of July, and furious debates at once broke out. There was a morning sitting on the 21st, which was entirely absorbed by the discussion. On Monday the 24th Lord Sandon reopened the debate in a long speech, praising the School Boards in the large towns, and apologizing for the lateness of the notification that the Government would accept Mr. Pell's clause. The debate again occupied nearly the whole sitting, and on a comparatively small division the Government

* Hansard, Vol. 230, col. 1534.

got a majority of 81—the votes being 221 against 140. On the next day Mr. Forster proposed to limit the dissolution to Boards compulsorily formed, but was defeated, after a long debate, by 57—172 to 115. Mr. Forster succeeded afterwards in putting a School Board to which a requisition to build had been sent, in the same position as one which had already built; and Mr. Shaw Lefevre introduced a most important limitation, by which the application from the district for the dissolution of a School Board must be made within the three months before the expiration of its triennial period. Mr. Forster also procured the insertion of a proviso enabling the Education Department to restore a dissolved School Board if an educational deficiency arises in the district; and Mr. Rylands introduced the further provision, that when the Education Department has consented to the dissolution of a School Board, its reasons for doing so shall be communicated to Parliament. Meanwhile Mr. Bright had been defeated by the small majority of 37 in a proposal to transfer all the powers of a dissolved School Board to the Local authority; and the clause, as amended, was only finally adopted by a majority of 41. The Bill got through Committee on the 31st of July. On the Report, on the 3rd of August, Lord Hartington moved a hostile resolution, which was defeated by a majority of 62. At this late period another surprise was given to both sides. Lord Robert Montagu proposed to make it the duty of the Guardians to pay fees for poor children in cases where School Boards fail to do so under the

25th clause of the Act of 1870. Lord Sandon accepted the amendment, and the debate broke out afresh. The Opposition asked for time to consider the change. The Government refused it; and after nearly a dozen divisions the adjournment was forced. The subject occupied the whole morning sitting of the next day; and in the evening a compromise was arrived at, the payment of fees being left entirely to the Board of Guardians; and the 25th clause of the Act of 1870, that great source of discord and division in the early working of the School Board system, being repealed, on the motion of its author, Mr. Forster. The Bill was read a third time on the 5th of August by a majority of 73—119 to 46. The Bill had to be hurried through the Lords, where it was read a third time on the last day before the prorogation.

The other measures of the Session were Lord Carnarvon's Anti-Vivisection Act, and Lord Cairns's Judicature Act, by which the Appellate Jurisdiction of the House of Lords was finally restored and defined, and our judicial system completed in accordance with the modifications the caucus of 1875 had insisted on in Lord Selborne's scheme. The House of Lords spent much time on two University Bills, which were sacrificed to the Education Bill in the Commons. Mr. Selater Booth carried a somewhat smaller Rivers Pollution Bill than that which had been, in Lord Salisbury's words, lost in the general confusion at the close of the previous Session. There was, of course, a Bankruptcy Bill, which was

read a second time in the Lords and came to nothing. The Bill for the establishment of the Bishopric of Truro passed. A Corrupt Practices Bill was brought in and dropped. The Epping Forest Act was a further step in the process by which the Corporation of London has succeeded in saving that open space for the people. Mr. McLagan succeeded in getting a Bill dealing with the Scottish Game Laws read a second time, in spite of Government opposition, but it got no farther. Mr. Meldon raised a most important debate on a proposal to assimilate the Irish borough franchise to that of England, and his motion, though opposed by the Government, was only defeated by the narrow majority of 13. On the question of Sunday Closing in Ireland Mr. Richard Smyth defeated the Government by a majority of 57, in spite of a promise that if his motion were withdrawn the Government would bring in a Bill to shorten still further the hours of Sunday drinking in Ireland. A Bill founded on the resolution was read a second time without a division, but had to be withdrawn. Mr. Cross's Prisons Bill was introduced, hotly debated, and withdrawn. Mr. Selater Booth's Valuation Bill underwent a similar process. Mr. Cross's Winter Assizes Bill was carried.

The most unsatisfactory part of the whole Session to the supporters of the Government was the Budget. The turning-point had already come. The abounding surplus left by Mr. Gladstone in 1874 had become a deficit in 1876, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not avoid proposing new

taxation. Expenditure had begun to rise as soon as the present Government came into power. It was £72,503,000 in the estimates for 1874, which Sir Stafford Northcote had inherited from his predecessors ; but his colleagues pushed it up to £74,328,040 before that first year was done. In 1875 the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proposed in his budget speech to spend £75,268,000, and had added £97,000 in supplementary estimates, but had exceeded these, and actually expended £76,421,773. The tendency was still upwards, and the budget forecast was £78,044,000 of outlay, and £77,270,000 of expenditure, a deficiency of £774,000. To meet this deficiency with a revenue which was no longer elastic, either the spirit duties or the income-tax must be raised, and he chose the latter. In order, however, to make this proposal more palatable to the householders, who were beginning to show strong disapproval of the Government, the line of exemption from income-tax was fixed at £150 instead of £100, and from all incomes of £400 a year and under, a deduction of £120 was to be made before the tax was levied. It had previously been a reduction of £80 from incomes of £300 a year and under. The proposal does not meet the objection to this tax, that it makes the earned income pay precisely the same as that which is independent of the labour of the recipient. It favours small incomes, not at the expense of large ones, but at the expense of all which are over £400 a year, and thus removes from some of the householders the motives which lead them to

protest against the unequal treatment of earned income. The proposal was resisted by Mr. Hubbard, but was adopted without a division. The income-tax thus took its first upward step, and Sir Stafford Northcote reckoned that he should get a revenue of £78,412,000, leaving a surplus over the enhanced expenditure of £368,000.

It had been noticed during the Session that Mr. Disraeli had left the Leadership of the House more and more in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There were rumours of his retirement from office, and anxieties respecting his health, which had suffered from the prolonged sittings in the House of Commons. On the last Friday in the Session he was in his place and made the speech previously described, and on the next day it was publicly announced that he would be raised to the peerage with the title of Earl of Beaconsfield. The Session dragged out till the 15th, when the Queen's Speech announced that all our Foreign relations were peaceable, and held out a confident prospect of "the maintenance of the good understanding which now prevails."

The Government had not gained by the Session, and it was losing ground in the constituencies all the year. There had been an election at Manchester in February, in which Mr. Jacob Bright had won back a lost Liberal seat; Mr. Blake had done the same, in the same month, at Leominster; and a few days later Mr. Denison kept a Conservative seat, which had not been contested in 1874, at East

Retford by a small majority. In April East Cumberland was won by Mr. E. S. Howard; in May a Liberal was returned for the Caermarthen boroughs without a contest for a seat which had been won by the Conservatives in 1874. There was a similar gain for Leitrim in July, and at Frome in November. Against these six Liberal conquests the Government had only to set the election for Cork, where two Home Rulers split the majority, and a Conservative slipped in between them. The preference for Mr. Stanley Leighton over Mr. Mainwaring in North Shropshire, the failure of the Conservative opposition in the Leeds election, the successful fight of Mr. Rylands at Burnley, and a hard struggle even to retain the seat Lord Beaconsfield had vacated, all portended evil to the Government. Mr. Chamberlain had taken his seat after an unopposed return as member for Birmingham in place of Mr. George Dixon; and Mr. Courtenay was returned for Liskeard on the death of Mr. Horsman in December. The School Board elections in London and elsewhere showed a considerable Liberal awakening, and were rightly regarded as a Vote of Confidence in the School Board system, in reply to the Conservative and Ministerial attacks upon it in the Education Debates. The year closed in with gloomy prospects for the people of decreasing trade and increased taxation; and with a storm of unpopularity blowing, though with somewhat diminished force, against the Ministry.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MASSACRES IN BULGARIA.

THE final declaration of the Prime Minister in the House of Commons had an effect the very contrary of that which he anticipated or desired. Rarely has Mr. Disraeli been more unpopular than at the moment when he disappeared from the House of Commons to emerge in due season in the Lords as Earl of Beaconsfield. Men could not help recollecting the great orator and statesman to whom the title had been offered in a former generation, and who had made Europe ring with his denunciations of the horrors of the French Revolution. Worse atrocities had been committed by our ally, and the new Earl of Beaconsfield instead of denouncing had denied them. The great outburst of national indignation in what was contemptuously described as the "atrocities agitation," culminated during the recess. Mr. MacGahan's letters in the *Daily News* were published in August and the early part of September. While Mr. Disraeli had been laughing at coffee-house babble in the Commons, Mr. MacGahan and Mr. Schuyler were painfully going over the scene of a great national martyrdom, and the story of what they saw was being read in every household in England, and in every town and

city in Europe and the United States. The effect was everywhere the same. With the exception of some partisans and partisan journals who still spoke and wrote of "alleged atrocities," and denounced their revealers to shield their perpetrators, there was only one feeling of hot and burning indignation.

Mr. MacGahan's first telegram from Philippopolis was published on the 7th of August; and attention was called to it in the House of Commons on the same day. It stated that Mr. Baring would report sixty villages burned; that the peasantry told Mr. Schuyler that they were afraid to come and testify, and that proof had been obtained of atrocities corresponding with those previously described. "A schoolmistress, a beautiful girl," said the telegram, "was arrested for embroidering a flag, and brutally maltreated." The brief description of the scene at Batak revealed, as Mr. Anderson told the House of Commons, "a tale far more bloody than that of Cawnpore."* "I counted from the saddle," said Mr. MacGahan, "a hundred skulls picked and licked clean, all of women and children. We entered the town. On every side were skulls and skeletons, charred among the ruins or lying entire where they fell in their clothing. There were skeletons of girls and women with long brown hair hanging to the skulls. We approached the church; there these remains were more frequent, until the ground was literally covered with skeletons, skulls and putrefying bodies in clothing. Between the church and the school there were heaps. The stench

* Hansard, Vol. 231, col. 727.

was fearful. We entered the churchyard ; the sight was more dreadful. The whole churchyard for three feet deep was festering with dead bodies partly covered—hands, legs, arms and heads, projected in ghastly confusion. I saw many little hands, heads, and feet of children of three years of age, and girls with heads covered with beautiful hair. The church was still worse. The floor was covered with rotting bodies quite uncovered. I never imagined anything so fearful The man who did all this, Achmed Aga, has been promoted and is still Governor of the district.”* The first letter, with the fuller details of what the telegram summarized, appeared on the day after Parliament had risen. There had been no hint in the Queen’s Speech of what all the world was talking about ; only a promise of continued efforts at mediation between the Porte and its Christian subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in its conflict with Servia and Montenegro, “bearing in mind alike the duties imposed upon me by treaty obligations, and those which arise from considerations of humanity and policy.” Men read this side by side with Mr. MacGahan’s first letter, and asked whether considerations of humanity and policy did not suggest some stern and prompt rebuke of these inhuman crimes. The second letter, dated from Pestera on the 1st of August, was printed on the 21st, and told the story of the efforts of the Turkish officials to keep Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler from coming in free contact with the people, and of the manner in which women

* Quoted in Hansard, Vol. 231, col. 727.

and children, houseless, widowed and orphaned, had crowded around them with their tales of woe, as soon as the Turkish officials had turned their backs. The next letter, dated from Tatar Bazardjik, a place about thirty miles north of Batak, on the 2nd of August, amplified the story of the visit to Batak, summarized in the telegram read by Mr. Anderson on the 7th. The Turkish officials had tried to prevent the party from going to Batak, but the people at Pestera were determined they should go, and many went with them to pay a visit to their desolated homes. Batak lies high up on a spur of the Balkans, and it took the party three hours of steep mountain climbing to reach it. When they reached the top of an elevated ridge which seemed to cut off a large valley from the rest of the world, they got a distant glimpse of a village lying in a hollow beneath them, and an hour and a half away. This was Batak. Around it on the hill sides were little fields of wheat and rye, golden in the sunshine, but with no signs of reapers. On the way down Mr. MacGahan's horse stumbled; it had trodden on a skull hidden by the grass. Farther on, the whole party drew up, suddenly arrested by a heap of skulls, intermingled with bones, skeletons and human flesh, from which a group of angry dogs fled at their approach. The ground all around was strewn with bones. At the distance of a hundred yards beneath them lay the village. "As seen from our standpoint," says Mr. MacGahan, "it reminded one somewhat of the ruins of Herculaneum or Pompeii. There was not a roof left, not a whole wall standing;

all was a mass of ruins from which arose, as we listened, a low plaintive wail, which filled the little valley and gave it voice." A nearer inspection of the ghastly heap showed that it was composed of the corpses of women and girls. "From my saddle," said Mr. MacGahan, "I counted a hundred skulls, not including those that were hidden beneath the others in the ghastly heap, nor those that were scattered far and wide through the fields. The skulls were nearly all separated from the rest of the bones, the skeletons were nearly all headless. These women had all been beheaded."*

The town itself had been a place of nine hundred houses, and probably from eight to nine thousand inhabitants. It was now peopled only by a few depressed men and a larger number of women and children, who at the approach of strangers set up a loud wail over their desolated homes, such as old Jeremiah heard in Ramah, "lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." "At the point where we descended into the principal street of the place," says Mr. MacGahan, "the people who had gathered around us pointed to a heap of ashes by a roadside, among which could be distinguished a great heap of calcined bones. Here a heap of dead bodies had been burnt." Farther on was the skeleton of a young girl; a victim, as all the rest were, of that violence of a brutal and half-savage soldiery of the horrors of which it is only possible

* "MacGahan's Letters," pp. 22 and 23, &c.

to hint. "As we approached the middle of the town," continues Mr. MacGahan, "bones, skeletons, skulls became more numerous. There was not a house beneath the ruins of which we did not perceive human remains, and the street beside was strewn with them. Before many of the doorways women were walking up and down, wailing their funeral chant. One of them caught me by the arm and led me inside of the walls, and there in one corner were the remains of another young girl, with her long hair flowing wildly about among the stones and dust; and the mother fairly shrieked with agony and beat her head madly against the wall. I could only turn round and walk out sick at heart, leaving her alone with her skeleton." Similar scenes were repeated over and over again. The village school-house was only in part standing. It had been burnt down over the heads of some two hundred women and children, whose charred corpses still lay under the blackened ruins. Close by, a hundred bodies had been buried two weeks after the massacre. The dogs partly uncovered them and then the water flowed in, and the grave had become a horrible and pestiferous pond. Near by was a saw-mill built on the stream; the mill-pond full of the unburied dead. Then they came to the churchyard described in the telegram. It was about fifty yards wide by seventy-five long, and was heaped with ruins and bodies three feet in depth, an attempt which had been made to bury the dead having been frustrated by the pestilential odour. "We were told," says Mr. MacGahan, "that there

were three thousand people lying here in this little churchyard alone, and we could well believe it. It was a fearful sight, a sight to haunt one through life. There were little curly heads there in that festering mass, crushed down by heavy stones; little feet not as long as your finger on which the flesh was dried hard by the ardent heat before it had time to decompose; little baby hands stretched out as if for help; babes that had died wondering at the bright gleam of sabres and the red hands of the fierce-eyed men who wielded them; children who had died shrieking with fright and terror; young girls who had died weeping and sobbing and begging for mercy; mothers who had died trying to shield their little ones with their own weak bodies, all lying there together festering in one horrid mass We looked into the church which had been blackened by the burning of the wood-work, but not destroyed nor even much injured. It was a low building with a low roof supported by heavy irregular arches that, as we looked in, seemed scarcely high enough for a tall man to stand under. What we saw there was too frightful for more than a hasty glance. An immense number of bodies had been partly burnt there, and the charred and blackened remains that seemed to fill it half way up to the low dark arches and make them lower and darker still, were lying in a state of putrefaction too frightful to look upon. I have never imagined anything so horrible. We all turned away sick and faint, and staggered out of the fearful pest-house, glad to get into the street again.

We walked about the place and saw the same things repeated over and over a hundred times Here they show us a house where twenty people were buried alive ; there another where a dozen girls had taken refuge and been slaughtered to the last one, as their bones amply testified. Everywhere horrors upon horrors.”*

They asked about the ghastly heap on which they had come on their way down, and the reply was that the remains were those of two hundred girls who had been captured and reserved for a fate worse than death. They had been kept for several days in the hands of their captors, suffering all that unbridled savages could attempt, and then, when the work of slaughter and horror in the town was done, had been taken out to the hill side, beheaded, and thrown in a heap to rot. “Mr. Disraeli was right,” concluded this terrible letter, “when he wittily remarked that the Turks usually terminated their connection with people who fell into their hands in a more expeditious manner than imprisoning them. And so they do. Mr. Disraeli was right. At the time he made that very witty remark these young girls had been lying there many days.”†

These letters, with an occasional telegram, continued to come every few days till the middle of September. Mr. MacGahan went over the whole country in the track of the destroying armies of the Turks and recorded what he saw. Mr. Schuyler accompanied him ; and in a Report dated from Philippopolis on

* “MacGahan's Letters,” pp. 29, 30.

† Id., p. 33.

the 10th of August, confirmed Mr. MacGahan's statements and gave lists of the villages which had been destroyed. His account of Batak, like that which Mr. Baring gave in his Report which was published later, agreed in minute details with that of Mr. MacGahan, which he had not seen. "The sight of Batak," wrote Mr. Schuyler to the American Minister at Constantinople, "is enough to verify all that has been said about the acts of the Turks in repressing the Bulgarian insurrection. And yet I saw it three months after the massacre. On every side were human bones, skulls, ribs, and even complete skeletons, heads of girls still adorned with braids of long hair, bones of children, skeletons still encased in clothing. Here was a house the floor of which was white with the ashes and charred bones of thirty persons burned alive there. Here was the spot where the village notable, Trandafil, was spitted on a spike and then roasted, and where he is now buried; there was a foul hole full of decomposing bodies; here a mill-dam filled with swollen corpses; here the school-house where 200 women and children who had taken refuge there were burned alive; and here the church and churchyard where fully a thousand half-decayed forms were still to be seen, filling the enclosure in a heap several feet high, arms, feet and heads protruding from the stones which had vainly been thrown there to hide them, and poisoning all the air."* Mr. Schuyler told also the story of Perushtitsa, where the women and children were bombarded in the church

* Mr. Schuyler's Report in Appendix to "MacGahan's Letters," p. 89.

and not a house left standing, of Klissura, of Kophristitsa, and worst of all of Panagurishta, where horrors more revolting than those at Batak were enacted, where "little children were made to bear the dripping heads of their comrades," and where "the scene of rapine, lust and murder was continued for three days." Mr. MacGahan had told of all these things, and efforts had been made to induce a belief that his statements were exaggerated; but Mr. Schuyler's Report confirmed them all, as Mr. Baring's was found to do when it could be kept back no longer. There had been no need for exaggeration. The facts themselves were eloquent enough. A bare statement seemed like rhetoric. When all the horrors Mr. MacGahan, Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring witnessed had been described, not one-half of the frightful story had been told. They saw only the traces of the storm three months after it had passed. The Turkish Government had let loose the savagery of its Asiatic hordes on the smiling villages and the peaceful pastoral population of one of its Christian provinces, there had been a carnival of crime and its attendant suffering such as the present century had not seen, and these ruined homes, these ghastly corpses, these heads of girls and little children, with their silent suggestion of unutterable horrors, were only the partial relics left after kindly Nature had been for many weeks at work obliterating the traces of the catastrophe.

The feeling of the English people as they read of these things was that such crimes committed by a

Government against its own subjects cried to Heaven for vengeance. Englishmen, however, only heard of them weeks after they had been done; and as the accounts came in it began to be understood in England how these events had influenced public feeling in districts nearer to them. The ferment of sympathy in Servia and Montenegro was explained; and the apparent insanity of these countries in rushing into war against the Turkish Empire was seen to be due as much to an irrepressible impulse of pity and rescue, as to supposed Muscovite intrigues. Englishmen were crying to their Government to interfere, much more, therefore, Montenegrins and Serbs. These people regard the Bulgarians as countrymen. They are of the same race, almost of the same language. A Russian, a Bulgarian, a Servian, a Montenegrin and a Tchek may meet, says Mr. MacGahan, and talk each in his own language, and all will understand the conversation. The news of these massacres, occurring as they did just beyond their own border, had been told in the towns and villages of Servia, and to the mountaineers of the Montenegrin hills, long before it reached the ears of Englishmen and made them tingle. The same sympathetic impulse which passed through the whole English people had already passed through these neighbouring lands, and inspired a wholesome longing for the wild justice of revenge. Servia and Montenegro could no more wait to measure their strength and estimate their chances in a war with the spoiler of their neighbours, than a brave man does when he sees a burly

villain belabouring a child. They might be weak, unprepared, unequal to the task of vengeance, but the call was too imperative to be disobeyed. The prophecy contained in the Andrassy Note,* in which Lord Derby himself had joined, that the Governments of Servia and Montenegro would be compelled by the sympathy of their populations to join the Bosnians and Herzegovinians in the spring, was fulfilled in the summer. Another and more imperative appeal to that sympathy had been made in the sufferings of their Bulgarian neighbours, and neither Government could longer hold its population back. Servia declared war on the 1st of July, and on the same day the Servian troops crossed the Drina. On the following day Prince Nikita set out with his army from Cettinge amid the cheers and the enthusiasm of his warlike people.

The news of this rash but heroic venture came to England just as the first accounts of the Bulgarian massacres were exciting indignant remonstrance and scornful denial. The real meaning of the declaration of war was not at first understood. General Tcherniaieff had been busy at the Servian capital for a couple of months, and there were the usual apocryphal stories of that mythically plentiful, but really scarce material, Russian gold. It soon began to be seen, however, that the Servian Prince had only put himself at the head of a national movement, and public sympathy went round to the Servian cause. The war began well; the Turks showed their

* See Chap. IX., p. 169.

usual wretched generalship, though the Turkish soldiers soon began to exhibit the good fighting qualities of their race. The Servians had crossed their own frontier and cut the Turkish line of defence in two. For a few weeks it seemed likely that the invasion might succeed; but the Turks, by virtue chiefly of their superior numbers and the fighting qualities of their men, gradually pushed the invaders back, and by the end of the month had transferred the fighting to Servian ground. Meanwhile the agitation caused by the *Daily News* letters had begun, and on the 14th of July Mr. Bright had introduced to Lord Derby a deputation which asked for some specific declaration of the Government on the policy to be observed in Turkey. Lord Derby made a strong non-intervention speech. He said we had sent the fleet to Besika Bay solely at the request of the Ambassadors, that there was no fear of a European War, as Russia, the only country which could make such a war, was most anxious for peace; that the utmost which could be asked from England was that she should see fair play, for though we had undertaken twenty years ago to guarantee the sick man against murder, we had never undertaken to guarantee him against suicide or sudden death. This speech had a reassuring effect. It showed, at least, that the vapourings of those who wrote and spoke in the interest of speculators in Turkish bonds, did not represent the views of the Foreign Secretary. It was delivered, moreover, on the very day on which Lord Derby had telegraphed to the British Consul at Adrianople to go to

Philippopolis and report on the truth of statements which his colleagues in the House of Commons continued for a month longer to pooh-pooh or to deny.

The publication of Mr. MacGahan's letters was simultaneous with the news of the steady pressing back of the Servians by the victorious Turks; and public interest was divided between the accounts of what had been done in Bulgaria and what was being done in Servia. Week by week as the letters were published, and the attempts of the Ministerial Press to cast suspicion on them became feebler and more frantic, public feeling grew more and more inflamed. Meetings had been held before Parliament was prorogued, but it was not till the recess that the full force of the national movement became manifest. The Ministers and their supporters had gone off for the holidays, the leaders of the Opposition and their Parliamentary followers were scattered over the Continent—Mr. Forster and Lord Hartington having gone East to see for themselves—and there was nobody to lead an agitation. But it needed no such aid. It sprang up in the absence of leaders and ran its course without them. People who take no part in politics, as well as the best men of both parties, without a thought of political distinctions or theological differences, joined in calling on the Government to wash its hands of all alliance with this murderous ruling class, and to interfere for the protection of its victims. During the month of August and the early part of September, meetings were held in nearly all the towns in the kingdom to express the horror of the public at the

doings of our "ally." In these meetings Conservative members of Parliament occasionally took part. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, for example, spoke at Bournemouth on the 15th of September, urging that England should use its power not only to stop the outrages but to secure the people against their recurrence, and show the Turkish Government that England was a Christian Power. Lord Derby himself described the result of this movement in a telegram to Sir Henry Elliot on the 22nd of August, expanded into a letter on the 5th of September. "It is my duty to tell you," he said, "that any sympathy which was previously felt here towards Turkey has been completely destroyed by the recent lamentable occurrences in Bulgaria. The accounts of outrages and excesses committed by the Turkish troops upon an unhappy and for the most part unresisting population have roused a universal feeling of indignation in all classes of English society, and to such a pitch has this risen, that in the extreme case of Russia declaring war against Turkey Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to interfere in defence of the Ottoman Empire. Such an event, by which the sympathies of the nation would be brought into direct opposition to its treaty engagements, would place England in a most unsatisfactory and even humiliating position."*

These last words indicated Lord Derby's sense of the complete change which the agitation had even then made in the attitude of England in the East.

* "Turkey," I. (1877), No. 159.

In describing the universal alienation of sympathy from Turkey he fitly represented the feeling of all classes but one. He did not speak for the Prime Minister, nor for the influential speculators in Turkish securities, who were anxious that England should preserve their debtor even from suicide or sudden death. Meanwhile Serbia had been obliged to confess defeat and had asked for the mediation of the Powers. The mediation was granted, an armistice was suggested, and Lord Derby telegraphed to Sir Henry Elliot to tell the Porte that if it was rejected England could do no more to avert the ruin the Sultan's Ministers had brought upon the Empire.* The Turkish Cabinet temporized. It suspended hostilities and proposed conditions of peace. Those conditions involved the further humiliation of Serbia, especially the occupation by Turkish troops of four fortresses which had been handed over to the Serbians in 1253, the abolition of the Servian militia, and a war indemnity. These terms were rejected by all the Powers; the Porte then offered further to suspend hostilities till the 2nd of October; but with the intention of using the interval in careful strengthening of its position and in preparations for conquest. The offer was refused, an armistice was asked for and denied, and on the 25th hostilities were resumed.

Meanwhile the agitation at home grew and strengthened. On the 5th of September Mr. Gladstone published his pamphlet entitled "Bulgarian Horrors

* "Turkey," I. (1877), No. 164.

and the Question of the East," and on the 9th he spoke to a vast assemblage of his constituents on Blackheath. The pamphlet, which ran through numerous editions in a few weeks, not only stimulated the public feeling but directed it. Mr. Gladstone retold the story which the *Daily News* had revealed, pointed out the confirmations which had come in from various sources, and showed that the denials and apologies of the Government had involved this country "in some amount, at least, of moral complicity in some of the basest outrages upon record."* He further showed that the cure for such evils was not the dissolution of the Turkish Empire but the sending away bag and baggage of the Turkish officials from these Christian provinces and the establishment of autonomous governments subject to the Sultan. In his speech at Blackheath, where vast crowds who had assembled in spite of heavy rain were greeted with a burst of sunshine while Mr. Gladstone spoke, he further developed this proposal. Speaking of what should be done for these subject provinces he said, "It is a very great question whether the simplest course is not that which I have presumed—for it is presumption—to recommend, namely, that all Turkish authorities should walk out of them. This is what they have done in Roumania. The four millions of people there are as completely emancipated from the practical control of the Turkish Government as you and I are. It is true that the Sultan is their suzerain; it is true that they pay him, I think, £80,000

* "Bulgarian Horrors," p. 8.

a year for being their suzerain. . . . I myself am favourable to retaining that suzerainty if we can, because I own that I am afraid that the harmony and concord of the Powers of Europe would be too severely strained were there a quantity of plundering going on, and it came to be a question of the distribution of the spoil. If anybody asks me how I would distribute the spoil, my answer is, I would not distribute it at all. I say that these provinces were not destined to be the property of Russia, or the property of Austria, or the property of England. They were for the inhabitants of the provinces. . . . I myself lean to the simpler method of saying to the Turk, you shall receive a reasonable tribute; you shall retain your sovereignty, your empire shall not be invaded, but never again, while the years roll their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hand of violence be raised by you, never again shall the floodgates of lust be opened by you, never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you for the sake of making mankind miserable in Bulgaria.”*

Every reader of these clear and striking words feels to-day that in them spoke the conscience and the statesmanship of England. But the conscience and the statesmanship of England were in the keeping of the Mephistopheles of statesmanship, who checkmated his wiser colleagues and laughed the ruling classes out of their heroic mood. Lord Beaconsfield was in no hurry to speak. He gave Sir Stafford

* Report in *Observer* of the 10th of September, 1876.

Northcote the first word, and, in a speech at Edinburgh seven days after that of Mr. Gladstone at Blackheath, the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke a couple of columns of hesitating sympathy and apologetic history. Sir Stafford Northcote evidently felt with the rest of the world, but remembered the Prime Minister, and words of hearty English feeling were checked upon his tongue. Lord Derby had been less reticent. On the 12th of September a deputation of working men went to the Foreign Office to urge the Government, among other things, to exact reparation for the injuries Bulgaria had received. Lord Derby did not apologize for the Turks. He spoke with complete frankness, and said as much to express sympathy with the public as a diplomatist could be expected to say in days when the Foreign Office regarded reticence as a virtue. He asserted that the people of Bulgaria had a right to the signal, conspicuous, and exemplary punishment of the Turkish commanders, and a claim on Europe for protection from like abuses in the future. This was the tone of all the Ministers but one. They bent before the storm. The principle of non-intervention was abandoned. The right of the subject populations of Turkey to European protection was granted; and even those devoted Conservatives who think more of party than of mankind, began to believe that they might safely join the rest of their countrymen in the demand that the carnival of crime and oppression in the East should be stayed for ever.

During all this time Lord Beaconsfield had kept

silence, and there were many who believed that he regretted the encouragement his speeches in Parliament had given to the Turks. His colleagues knew better, and it was probably to their regret that it became needful the Prime Minister should speak. The Buckinghamshire election was going badly. Mr. Carington was running Mr. Fremantle hard. The agitation, moreover, was extending with alarming rapidity, and on Monday, the 18th of September, six days after Lord Derby's encouraging declarations to the working men, a vast meeting held at the Guildhall, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, had passed resolutions urging the Government to interfere for the protection of the Bulgarians, and to call Parliament together for an autumn session. Three days later, and on the day before the polling in the county, Lord Beaconsfield went to a farmers' meeting at Aylesbury, and made the long-expected speech. Like all his speeches it disappointed the world. From beginning to end it contained not one single word of sympathy with that feeling of the Good Samaritan with which all England was thrilling. The speech may be described as an angry complaint that the country would not support the Government in its policy of passing by on the other side with the priest and the Levite of the parable, and leaving to its fate the unhappy nationality which had fallen among thieves. The Prime Minister, indeed, took the part of the thieves, and denounced in strong words all who had come forward with any help or sympathy for their victim. He began with Mr. Gladstone. After pointing

out the difficulties which the public agitation, which he described as "impolitic and founded on erroneous data," put in the way of the Government, he said: "The danger at such a moment is that designing politicians may take advantage of such sublime sentiments, and may apply them for the furtherance of their sinister ends. I do not think that there is any language that can denounce too strongly conduct of such description. He who at such a moment would avail himself of such a commanding sentiment in order to obtain his own individual ends, to a course which he knows, which he may know, to be injurious to the interests of his country, and not favourable to the welfare of mankind, is one whose conduct language cannot too strongly condemn. It outrages the principle of patriotism, which is the soul of free communities; it does more than this—it influences in the most injurious manner the common welfare of humanity. Such conduct, if it be pursued by any man at this moment, ought to be indignantly condemned by the people of England; and in the general havoc and ruin it may accomplish, it may fairly be described as worse than any of those Bulgarian atrocities of which we have heard so much."

It is no wonder that violence like this overreached itself and alienated from the Government many active supporters. The attack on Servia was, however, still more elaborate, and was not as quickly seen through. It had been a charge against the Government that from the time of the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum it had done nothing. It had ruined the

scheme of the other Powers and proposed nothing of its own. Lord Beaconsfield repelled this charge in language which probably made Lord Derby's hair stand on end when he read it in the papers. "From the moment that we declined, and gave our reasons why we declined, entering into the Berlin Memorandum, there were on the whole, I should say, on the part of every one of the Great Powers, cordial attempts to act with us in every way which would bring about a satisfactory termination; but by no Power have we been met so cordially as by Russia. If you ask me to sum up in two sentences what was, of course, daily and hourly communication between the Powers or their Representatives in England, I must tell you this, that in the late spring of this year, peace, and peace on principles which would have been approved by every wise and good man, might have been accomplished. What happened? That happened which was not expected. Servia declared war upon Turkey. That is to say, the Secret Societies of Europe declared war upon Turkey. . . . Well, there was an end, of course, to our negotiations."

The Duke of Argyll thinks that in this reference to Secret Societies "the Prime Minister was right," and adds, "It is when those Public Societies which are called Governments fail in their duty and abdicate their proper functions that Secret Societies find their opportunities of action."* It was, however, entirely false to say that the action of Servia was not expected. Everybody had been looking for it

* "Eastern Question," Vol. I., p. 273.

for months. The Andrassy Note, which the Cabinet of Lord Beaconsfield had sanctioned, and which Lord Derby had signed, concluded, as has been already pointed out, with a declaration that unless the reforms it recommended were granted, the Governments of Servia and Montenegro would be compelled, not by the Secret Societies, but "by popular sympathies," to join the insurrection in the spring. The declaration of war by Servia was, therefore, not only not unexpected, but had been foretold by all the Governments of Europe in December, 1875. Nor was Lord Beaconsfield's statement that the English Government had proposed alternatives to the scheme of the Berlin Memorandum better founded. That Memorandum was rejected on the 19th of May, and Lord Derby told the House of Lords on the 31st of July that the Northern Powers would not have accepted any proposal at once, even if the Government had had such a proposal to make.* On the 12th of June Lord Derby told the Russian Envoy that "nothing remained except to allow the renewal of the struggle."† On the 22nd of June Lord Derby had spoken still more explicitly to the Austrian Ambassador, and declared that the Government were ready to take part in the work of pacification when they saw a chance of doing so with effect, and that if they now abstained it was only because they saw nothing to be done. When circumstances led them to alter that opinion their inaction would cease.‡

* Hansard, Vol. 231, col. 99. † "Turkey," III. (1876), No. 427.

‡ Id., III. (1876), No. 481.

On the 29th of June Lord Derby made a similar communication to the Russian Ambassador. The disproof of Lord Beaconsfield's statement is therefore complete. Not only was Servia's declaration of war anticipated and watched for, but so far from stopping the active negotiations of the British Government, it found Lord Derby explaining to member after member of the diplomatic body the reasons why no such negotiations had taken place or could be entered on. There was not even any basis of reality on which the circumstantial romance of the Prime Minister could rest.* It was only one more step in the Disraelian policy of governing the people by deceiving them.

The object of the speech was, of course, to turn the Buckinghamshire election; and as the electors could not, at once, see through its misstatements, it had its effect. Mr. Fremantle was returned the next day, though only by the narrow majority of 186. It went forth to the world, however, and to the Turks in particular, that no matter what the people of England might feel, the Prime Minister of England had no sympathy with Servia. Just as he had spoken of Mr. Gladstone's action in sanctioning the agitation as worse than any of the atrocities of which the murder of women and little children had been among the mildest, so he had spoken of the Servian war as an "outrageous and wicked war, for

* See Letter of the Duke of Argyll in *Daily News*, November 17, 1876, also Mr. Sedley Taylor's "Conduct of H. M. Ministers on the Eastern Question," p. 32.

of all the wars that ever were waged," continued Lord Beaconsfield, "there never was a war less justifiable than the war made by Servia against the Porte. The Porte may have ten thousand faults—I will not say ten thousand crimes, but ten thousand faults—and those faults, its weak government and other circumstances, may lead unhappily to crimes. But still there is not the slightest doubt that as regards the relations between Servia and the Porte, not only every principle of international law, not only every principle of public morality, but every principle of honour was outraged."

Lord Derby did not thus treat the Servian war which, nine months before, he had joined in declaring to be inevitable. He had received Mr. Baring's Report a week before Lord Beaconsfield's speech, and knew from it that the public indignation was not based, as Lord Beaconsfield still said it was, on erroneous data. On the very day after the Prime Minister's Aylesbury speech Lord Derby wrote to Sir Henry Elliot, instructing him to demand audience of the Sultan, to tell him the facts that Mr. Baring's Report established, and in the name of the Queen to denounce the authors of the outrages and call for their punishment.* When the deputation from the Guildhall meeting called on him, on the 27th of September, he told them this, but explained, to their great dissatisfaction, that the integrity of Turkey, and the preservation of peace, were the two chief objects the English Government had in view. Read-

* "Turkey," I. (1877), No. 316.

ing this declaration together with the speech of the Prime Minister, the Turkish Pachas had no fear for Sir Henry Elliot's denunciations. They were regarded as only a little by-play, rendered needful by the absurd excitement of English public opinion; to be gone through, indeed, with solemn face and formal publicity, but to have no effect on the relations between two friendly Governments. In this way a kind of tacit understanding was set up which was never put into words, which Lord Derby never sanctioned, but which the Turks boldly acted on. It failed them at a later period, when even the Prime Minister was unable to drag his country into war in their defence; but it stood them in good stead all through the negotiations which followed the short suspension of hostilities with Servia, and it was the secret cause of the complete failure even of such diplomatic efforts as Lord Derby put forth. The Turks knew that they had a friend at Court more powerful than the Foreign Secretary, and they treated Lord Derby's remonstrances and suggestions with respectful indifference.

The Aylesbury speech was made on the 20th of September, and the war with Servia began again on the 24th. On the 25th Sir Henry Elliot urged on the Porte certain bases of peace, which showed the influence on Lord Derby's mind of Mr. Gladstone's arguments. These bases of peace were the giving by the Porte of guarantees for improved administration in Bulgaria, local or administrative autonomy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the return in

Servia and Montenegro to the *status quo ante bellum*. Sir H. Elliot at the same time threatened the Porte, that if it rejected these proposals, war with Russia would follow, and England must leave Turkey to her fate. In spite of this clear warning, the Porte, after a short delay, rejected the proposals. Meanwhile Lord Derby, who would not consent to enforce a six weeks' armistice, as Russia proposed, suggested one of not less than a month, in the shape of a British ultimatum. His words to Sir Henry Elliot were, that if the proposed terms of peace were refused, he was "to press upon the Porte as an alternative an armistice of not less than a month, stating that you are instructed in case of refusal to leave Constantinople."* Sir Henry Elliot might also say that a Conference would follow the armistice. The Porte replied by a counter-proposal of an armistice till the end of March, which Lord Derby accepted. The Foreign Minister of Italy said that in proposing such a term the Porte was laughing at the diplomatists, and Russia refused to urge it on Servia and Montenegro, to whom it would be ruinous. These negotiations went on during the whole of October, and on the 29th the Turks won a great victory over the Servians, almost annihilating their defence. At length, on the 31st, the Emperor of Russia sent to General Ignatieff similar instructions to those which Lord Derby had given to Sir H. Elliot nearly four weeks earlier. If the Porte did not within forty-eight hours accept an armistice of six weeks General

* "Turkey," I. (1877), No. 516.

Ignatieff was to leave Constantinople at once, and diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey were to be broken off. The Porte knew that this threat was meant to be carried out, and was not merely for dramatic effect. It did not fling a counter-proposal in the face of Russia, as it had done in the face of England. On the contrary, it accepted it at once. The Russian ultimatum was sent in on the evening of the last day of October, and on the 1st of November an answer was sent to the Russian Embassy that the armistice was granted, and that orders had already been sent to the military commanders to suspend operations.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EASTERN QUESTION FROM THE ENFORCED ARMISTICE TO THE FAILURE OF THE CONFERENCE.

THE ultimatum to the Turks was the starting point of a new era in the diplomatic relations of England and Russia. It was Russia's notice to Europe, that if nothing was done by the other Powers to put a stop to the growing disorders of the Turkish Empire, Russia was resolved to act alone. The Czar personally explained it in this sense to our Ambassador, Lord Augustus Loftus, who was then with him at Livadia. In a long conversation, the substance of which Lord Augustus Loftus at once telegraphed to Lord Derby, the Emperor explained the policy he was pursuing with regard to Turkey. At the end of September Count Schouvaloff had proposed to Lord Derby that if the Porte refused the conditions of peace which England had then put forward, a simultaneous coercive movement on the part of all the Powers should be made at once. This movement, it was suggested, should consist, firstly, of the occupation of Bosnia by an Austrian force; secondly, of the occupation of Bulgaria by a Russian army; and, thirdly, of the entrance into the Bosphorus of the united fleets of Europe. The Czar, however, was

ready to drop the first two suggestions, and to regard the entrance of the fleets into the Bosphorus as sufficient. This proposition had the sanction of Austria-Hungary, and curiously foreshadowed one important item in the Treaty of Berlin. There can be little doubt that had this naval demonstration been made the Turks would have yielded at once, and the Eastern Question would have been settled without war, without the disturbance of trade in the succeeding years, and without any dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. The scheme, however, seems to have roused all the slumbering suspicions of Lord Derby as to the designs of the Imperial Powers. Bosnia in the hands of Austria, Bulgaria with a Russian force even temporarily encamped in it, had such terrors for the Foreign Secretary, that even the milder measure which had been verbally associated with these proposals suffered from the contact. Once more, therefore, England refused to join in coercing the Porte, and nothing was done.

In the course of the futile negotiations for an armistice which occupied the whole of October, it got whispered abroad that Russia had proposed to occupy Bulgaria, and the bugbear of Russian aggrandizement was paraded before the English people, with the result of checking, in some degree, the expression of sympathy with the Bulgarian nation. Lord Derby himself told the Russian Ambassador, as a reason why the Russians should accept the Turkish scheme of a six months' armistice, that the proposal to occupy Bulgaria had created a feeling which might counteract the anti-

Turkish sentiment which the outrages had created.* The explanations given by the Czar to Lord Augustus Loftus were addressed to this suspicious temper of the English Foreign Office. The Emperor told our Ambassador that the present state of things was intolerable, and could not be allowed to continue; and that unless Europe was prepared to act with firmness and energy, Russia must act alone. The Emperor continued, that he regretted to see that there still existed in England an inveterate suspicion of Russian policy, and repeated the solemn assurances he had given on several occasions that he desired no conquest, and aimed at no aggrandizement. "His Majesty," continued the despatch, "pledged his sacred word of honour, in the most solemn and earnest manner, that he had no intention of acquiring Constantinople, and that if necessity should oblige him to occupy a portion of Bulgaria it would only be provisionally, and until peace and the safety of the Christian population were secured."† These assurances were well received by the Queen's Government, and on the 5th of November Lord Augustus Loftus reported the gratification of the Czar at the satisfaction Lord Derby had expressed.

While these assurances of mutual confidence were passing between the Czar and Lord Derby, Prince Gortschakoff had sent further assurances through the Russian Ambassador in London, and had asked, "What prevents England from fulfilling her part by joining with us for the protection of the Christians, and sharing with us their gratitude and sympathy?"‡ He

* "Turkey," I. (1877), No. 619. † Id., No. 952. ‡ Id., No. 1065.

had further suggested that the representatives of the six Powers at Constantinople should discuss the bases of peace proposed by England. Prince Gortschakoff's question seems to have stirred the Foreign Office to action. Lord Derby replied with the suggestion of a European Conference, proposals for which were sent out at once. The basis of this Conference was to be the English peace suggestions of the 25th of September.* It was further proposed that the Powers should, as a preliminary condition, acknowledge the independence and integrity of Turkey, and should sign a declaration which amounted to a Self-denying Ordinance against exclusive influence or territorial aggrandizement. The Conference thus proposed was accepted by all the Powers, and on the 8th of November Lord Derby announced to Sir Henry Elliot that Lord Salisbury and he would attend it as the English representatives. "At this moment," says the Duke of Argyll, "it may be said that England had, to some extent, recovered her position, and everything depended on the question whether she could keep it by having some definite policy, and by having spirit to enforce it. She had been chiefly instrumental in securing the general assent of Europe to a Congress. Russia had always been willing. But Austria had been adverse to this measure; and Germany had been, to say the least, indifferent. England had, moreover, laid down a basis for peace, and for Turkish reforms. It was a basis conceived in the most conservative spirit, and involving the very minimum of change. But it

* See Chapter XI., pp. 241, 242.

was a basis at least founded on the principle of European interference, and of demanding European guarantees. As such it had received, at last, general assent.”*

This critical moment was chosen by Lord Beaconsfield for a fighting speech. The world knew nothing of the pacific assurances our Government had received from Russia, nor of the satisfaction with those assurances that Lord Derby, on behalf of his colleagues, had expressed. Yet had the public understood the Prime Minister as well as those who have acted with him know him now, it would have been generally suspected that when he made a loud threat of war against a great Power he had in his pocket secure pledges of peace. The Guildhall banquet came just at the moment when Russia had given these pledges, when an agreement had been come to between all the Powers, and when Turkey was hesitating whether to accept the proposed Conference or not. Lord Beaconsfield gave his hearers an historical review of the negotiations, and brought them up to the point at which he was able to gratify the Lord Mayor and his guests with the important announcement that the Conference on the affairs of Turkey would be held, and that Lord Salisbury would attend it. But he omitted the most important part of the whole story—the explanations which the Emperor Alexander had given of the aims of Russian policy, and left his hearers under the impression that Russia was anxious for mere territorial aggrandizement. Turning, then, to speak of England,

* “Eastern Question,” Vol. I., pp. 295–6.

and setting her in tacit contrast to Russia, he said—
“England is the country above all others whose policy is Peace. We have nothing to gain by war. We are essentially a non-aggressive Power. There are no provinces that we desire to appropriate. We have built up an Empire of which we are proud, and our proudest boast is this—that that Empire subsists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But if the struggle comes, it should also be recollected that there is no country so prepared for war as England, because there is no country whose resources are so great. In a righteous cause, and I trust that England will never embark in war except in a righteous cause, a cause which concerns her liberty, her independence, or her Empire, England is not a country which will have need to inquire whether she can enter into a second or a third campaign. In a righteous cause England will commence a fight that will not end until right is done.”*

These are fine sentiments, and every Englishman must share them. The Lord Mayor's guests greeted them with loud cheers, as any English audience would—and did not wait to ask whether they were appropriate to the occasion. Indeed, had they asked the question, they had no means of answering it. Nobody outside the Cabinet knew of the friendly, pacific, and reassuring messages which the English Government and that of Russia had exchanged only three days before. On the next day the Emperor Alexander, who had heard of this speech with astonishment, made

* *Daily News Report*, November 10, 1876.

a reply in addressing the Nobles of the Communal Council at Moscow, in which he distinctly said that if the Conference which was about to meet did not succeed in obtaining for the Christians of the East what right and justice demand, "Russia will be forced to take up arms, and I count on the support of my people." A day or two later Prince Gortschakoff told Lord Augustus Loftus that he feared Lord Beaconsfield's speech would have a bad effect at Constantinople, and Lord Augustus informed Lord Derby that the Prince was much disturbed in consequence. But that bad effect at Constantinople was probably just what Lord Beaconsfield intended. His speech was not merely spoken to Englishmen; it was a word to wise Pachas. It was a notice that the negotiations then to be undertaken had no meaning and would have no result. That was the sense in which the speech was interpreted at Constantinople, and events proved that the interpretation was right.

The Czar soon showed that he meant the Conference to be as real as Lord Beaconsfield meant it to be unreal. Just a week after his declaration at Moscow he mobilised six *corps d'armée*, consisting of 160,000 men and 648 guns. This action was at once explained by Count Schouvaloff in a communication to the Foreign Office in precisely the sense of the Czar's speech. Europe, he said, had resolved to guarantee the Christian population of Turkey against the incorrigible abuses of the Turkish administration. "But while diplomacy has been deliberating for a whole year, with a view to reduce to practice the combined

wishes of Europe, the Porte has had time to summon from the recesses of Asia and Africa, the ban and arrière-ban of the least disciplined forces of Islamism, to rouse Mussulman fanaticism, and to crush under the weight of its numbers the Christian population, who are struggling for their very existence. The perpetrators of the horrible massacres which have so shocked Europe remain unpunished, and at this very moment their example tends to propagate and perpetuate throughout the whole of the Ottoman Empire, and in full view of indignant Europe, similar acts of barbarism and violence. Under these circumstances, his Majesty the Emperor has deemed it necessary to mobilise a portion of his army. His Imperial Majesty does not wish for war, and will do his utmost to avoid it. But he is determined not to halt before the principles which have been recognized by the whole of Europe as just, humane, and necessary, and which public opinion in Russia has taken up with the utmost energy, have been fully carried out and secured by efficient guarantees.”*

The explanation was accepted as satisfactory, and there were no echoes from any of the other Ministers of the after-dinner strain of their chief. Lord Derby, at Count Schouvaloff's request, published the despatch from Lord Augustus Loftus, which showed that when the Premier spoke his Government had already learned and acknowledged the pacific intentions of Russia. Meanwhile Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Cross, who have always been the members of the Cabinet

* “Turkey,” I. (1877), No. 1011.

to express popular sentiments, spoke strongly of the need of coercing Turkey. On the 13th of November the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking to the Dolphin Society of Bristol, at its Colston dinner, declared it to be necessary that something should be done for the better government of the provinces of the Turkish Empire. "As long as you leave that sore open which has been at the bottom of the original cause of the disturbance, any peace you may promote for the moment will be but a hollow peace, and will be but as a bit of sticking plaister put upon a wound where there is festering matter still below."* He spoke, too, in very strong terms of "the spirit of fair and reasonable compromise and consideration" shown by the Emperor of Russia. A week later Mr. Cross spoke in the same sense to the Birmingham Conservative Association. Speaking of the Conference and of Lord Salisbury's appointment to represent the Government, he said, "With all due respect to Turkey, I must say that the time has come when what I must call the waste-paper currency—Turkish promises—shall be paid in sterling coin."† Lord Derby had been no less emphatic. He had been very apologetic to the Turks in forcing on them the acceptance of the Conference, but he had forced it nevertheless, and they accepted it with reluctance, on the very day on which Lord Salisbury set out to attend it.

In a flying visit to the four European capitals Lord Salisbury had ample opportunity to learn how

* *Daily News*, November 14, 1876.

† *Id.*, November 6, 1876.

much depended on the success of the Conference. At Paris he found in the Duc Decazes no disposition to thwart the determination of Russia that the Eastern Question should be finally settled, and at Berlin he was met by the assurance that the course taken by the Emperor Alexander had been imposed on him by circumstances, and that the promises of Turkey could no longer be accepted. A few days after his visit to the German capital, Prince Bismarck told the Reichsrath that if Russia went to war "we shall put no veto on her action, since the objects she pursues are also our own." At Vienna Lord Salisbury, by his own report, "was gratified to find that Count Andrassy's views were in many respects identical with those entertained by Her Majesty's Government." At Rome he found the feeling to be strongly in favour of resolute action towards the Porte. Arrived at Constantinople, he met General Ignatieff, and found him most friendly and conciliatory. Lord Salisbury told him that he was instructed to oppose any scheme of military occupation, and General Ignatieff replied that the Russian Government would by no means insist upon such occupation. The relations of the British and Russian Plenipotentiaries became intimate. They were described as walking arm-in-arm about the streets of Constantinople, and when Lord Salisbury's course in the Congress puzzled the speculators in Turkish Bonds, who thought England should go to war to save their debtor from extinction, they loudly accused him of falling under the influence of the soldier-diplomatist of Russia.

It is needless to say that this charge was false. But there were appearances that justified some of the suspicion which Lord Salisbury's course at the Conference aroused among these interested sympathizers with the Turks. They imagined that the policy of the Government was to be learned from Lord Beaconsfield's Aylesbury and Guildhall speeches, and when Lord Salisbury seemed rather to take his inspiration from Mr. Gladstone's suggestions, they were naturally disappointed and incensed. The story of the sittings of the Conference belongs rather to European than to English history, and is admirably and powerfully told in the seventh chapter of the Duke of Argyll's book on the Eastern Question. There were practically two Conferences : the Preliminary Conference, from which the Turks were excluded, and the Plenary Conference, at which their representatives were present. The Preliminary Conference elaborated a scheme which practically embodied Mr. Gladstone's policy of conferring administrative autonomy on the Christian provinces. In the course of these discussions, Lord Salisbury had given up, with the consent of the Cabinet at home, the opposition at first announced to any military occupation, and had consented that the proposed International Commission to reorganize Bulgaria should be supported by 6,000 troops from Belgium or some minor State. The complete scheme was founded on the bases of peace which Lord Derby had laid down, and was described by the Russian Ambassador as "the extreme and irreducible minimum" of reforms and guarantees to which Russia

could consent. It was presented by all the Plenipotentiaries as the scheme of United Europe.

The next step was the adoption of this scheme by the Porte in full Conference. The first meeting of this Conference showed that the whole was intended by the Turks to be what the Duke of Argyll calls it, "a very solemn farce." While the Plenipotentiaries were sitting, a salvo of artillery was heard, and Safvet Pacha interrupted the proceedings to explain that a great act was at that hour accomplished which changed a form of Government which had endured for six hundred years. It was the promulgation of Midhat Pacha's Turkish Constitution, which was loudly acclaimed by the Turkish speculators at home, but proved to be only one act in the farce which the Plenipotentiaries were made to play by Turkish obstinacy and Lord Beaconsfield. The Conference might have been the starting point of a new era of peace in Eastern Europe. It became a farce, because the Turks felt, as Midhat Pacha told Lord Salisbury during the sittings, that they could count on Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield. Some reason had been given for this confidence. Lord Derby had written to Lord Salisbury on the day after the first sitting, that the Government had decided "that England will not assent to, nor assist in, coercive measures, military or naval, against the Porte, but the Porte, on the other hand, is to be made to understand that it can expect no assistance from England in the case of war."* It appears, moreover, from another communication made

* "Turkey," II. (1877), No. 78.

to Lord Salisbury at a later period, that Lord Derby had said precisely the same thing in a private note to Musurus Pacha a few days before. Musurus Pacha evidently sent this note to the Grand Vizier, who got it at about the time at which Lord Salisbury received the official communication. How he interpreted it we know from his own statement. He took it to mean that England would not let Turkey be coerced, and he consequently ordered Safvet Pacha to send off a telegram of effusive thanks, the meaning of which rather puzzled Lord Derby himself. "You will explain to his Lordship," said this despatch to Musurus Pacha, "in the name of the Grand Vizier, that the Sublime Porte reckons more than ever on the kind support of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty under the difficult circumstances we are passing through. The great wisdom and spirit of justice which distinguish the eminent Minister who directs with such loyalty the foreign relations of England, form a sure guarantee for us that he will gladly give us a new proof of his kindness and valued friendship."*

These, however, were the undercurrents, and though they swept the ship steadily on to the rocks, they made no other sign upon the surface. There was nothing in Lord Salisbury's course to encourage the Turks; on the contrary, there was everything in it to exasperate the pro-Turkish enthusiasts at home. They accused him of treachery, of having fallen under Russian influence, of being more Gladstonite than Mr. Gladstone. Yet Lord Salisbury was simply faith-

* "Turkey," II. (1877), No. 87.

ful to his instructions and to Lord Derby's policy, when he urged on the Porte the adoption of the Conference scheme with all the powers at his command. He ably repelled the objection which was loudly urged at home, that the scheme of the Conference was a Russian one. "There is no ground in history," said Lord Salisbury in a despatch explaining and defending the proposals of the Powers, "for the belief that a grant of practical self-government to the Bulgarian provinces would develop any such desire (as that of incorporation in the Russian Empire) in the population."* The proposals were watered down sitting after sitting, the irreducible minimum was further reduced, and then the whole scheme was finally refused. The Turks made ample promises, but would give no guarantees. Lord Salisbury told them in the last sitting that "it was not to record projects of improvement that the Conference of the Powers had met in Constantinople. Its task was to establish administrative autonomy and effective guarantees. As soon as a refusal to grant these has been duly recorded, its mission is completed, and its existence can no longer be prolonged."† Its mission had been completed in utter failure and disappointment, because the Turks knew that England would do nothing herself to enforce the terms of settlement they had rejected, and they believed they could count on her help in resisting any attempted enforcement by Russia. "The decision of the English Cabinet,"

* "Turkey," II. (1877), No. 167.

† Id., Inclosure in No. 230.

says Midhat Pacha in his article in the *Nineteenth Century*, of June 1878, "was perfectly well known to us, but we knew still better that the general interests of Europe and the particular interests of England were so bound up in our dispute with Russia, that in spite of all the declarations of the English Cabinet, it appeared to us to be absolutely impossible for her to avoid interfering sooner or later in this Eastern dispute. This profound belief, added to the reasons we have mentioned, was one of the principal factors of our contest with Russia." This profound belief was a profound mistake; but the tone of Lord Beaconsfield's speeches fostered it, and the despatches of the Foreign Office did not sufficiently discourage it. The Turks, however, were fully possessed by it, and therefore there remained nothing to do, for the present, but to break up the Conference. It accordingly met for the last time on the 20th of January, 1877. Two days later Lord Salisbury came back; and on the 25th, Sir Henry Elliot followed him home.

There is no reason to believe that Lord Derby ever gave a hint of any kind to sanction or encourage this delusion of the Turkish Ministry. Lord Derby's policy from first to last was a policy of peace. Its object was to keep the Eastern Question from coming to a crisis, by the preservation, as far as possible, of the *status quo*. His hope was that the Turks themselves would have had the wisdom to effect the reforms and give the guarantees which the united voice of Europe asked for. He had himself expressly

told them that the state of feeling in England which the accounts of their wicked misgovernment had produced, rendered it impossible that England should interfere, even if Russia declared war. He had indeed desired that their concessions should be made with a good grace, and had instructed Lord Salisbury not to use the language of menace. He had done this, however, in strict consistency with his view of the situation, which was that England was at the Conference as a friend counselling an old ally for that ally's own good, urging his counsel by every argument which could address the reason, but stopping short of threats which could never have been carried out. Such a policy seems impotent, and actually proved to be so; but in the existing circumstances none other was possible. English feeling at the time was profoundly divided. The vast majority of the people would have welcomed a policy of coercion; but the Parliamentary majority, which has never represented the conscience of the nation, but only the relaxed moral mood of 1874, had no care for the oppressed populations and was full of sympathy with their oppressors. Had Lord Beaconsfield resolved on supporting the Turks, he might have got a House of Commons' vote in his favour; had he determined to coerce them, he must have governed by means of the Opposition, or appealed to the country. He did neither, or tried to do both. His Government urged Reform on the Turks, while he himself talked defiance of Russia. He had one voice for the Guildhall guests, and quite another for the Conference.

The Turks believed they knew which to choose and stand by ; and they chose the wrong.

The calculations of Midhat Pacha and his colleagues were baffled by an element of which they were not likely to take cognizance. Public opinion in England is stronger than autocratic Ministers, or even than great Parliamentary majorities, and public opinion at the end of 1876 had made itself clearly felt. The agitation caused by Mr. MacGahan's letters had modified the policy of the Government, and produced a satisfactory change in the tone of all the members of the Cabinet except its chief. But Lord Beaconsfield's Guildhall speech was read in the same sense in England as in Constantinople, and the hope of eventual interference on their behalf which the Turks derived from it came home to right-feeling Englishmen as a fear that they might be launched into a wicked war. It was therefore resolved by the Parliamentary Committee which was constituted at the close of the Session in order to watch the progress of events in the East, to hold a National Conference in London. The object of the Conference was declared to be "To consider the best means of promoting the favourable progress of the Eastern Question through the concert of the Powers and nations of Europe, and particularly of obtaining for the Christian provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, a release from the direct rule of the Porte, with due guarantees for the equal rights of the non-Christian population, and also of diffusing through the country sound information on the various branches of the question."

Persons who sympathized with these objects were invited to sign the circular convening the meeting, and the response was general. Names flowed in from all quarters—and the list, when it was complete, contained with but few notable exceptions the most eminent names in art, science, literature and learning, even in medicine and divinity, which the age has produced. Among the most notable expressions of opinion thus educed was a letter addressed by Mr. Carlyle to Mr. George Howard. This letter, which belongs both to literature and to history, was published in the *Daily News* of the 28th of November. Mr. Carlyle wrote:—

5, CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA,

24 November, 1876.

DEAR HOWARD,

It by no means seems so evident to me as it does to you and your friends that an utterance of my opinion on the Eastern Crisis could be important; but since you assure me that it might be of service to many persons now in doubt on that matter, I overcome the very great reluctance I had to speak of the subject at all, and will try to indicate summarily what my own poor private views upon it are.

In the first place, then, for fifty years back my clear belief about the Russians has been that they are a good and even noble element in Europe. Conspicuously they possess the talent of obedience, of silently following orders given; which, in the universal celebration of ballot-box, divine freedom, &c., will be found an invaluable and peculiar gift. Ever since Peter the Great's appearance among them, they have been in steady progress of development. In our own time they have done signal service to God and man in drilling into order and peace anarchic populations all over their side of the world. The present Czar of Russia I judge to be a strictly honest and just man:—and in short my belief is that the Russians are called to do great things in the world, and to be a conspicuous benefit, directly and indirectly, to their fellow-men.

To undertake a war against Russia on behalf of the Turk, it is evident to me would be nothing short of insanity; and has become, we may fondly hope, impossible for any Minister, or Prime Minister,

that exists among us. Twenty years ago we already had a mad war in defence of the Turk; a mass of the most hideous and tragic stupidity, mismanagement, and disaster (in spite of bravest fighting) that England was ever concerned in since I knew it: a hundred millions of money and above sixty thousand valiant lives were spent in the enterprise. By Treaties of Paris, &c., the Turk was preserved intact; binding himself only to reform his system of government, which certainly of all things in the world needed reform. And now, after twenty years of waiting, the Turk is found to have reformed nothing, nor attempted to reform anything. Not to add that by bankrupt finance he has swallowed a disastrous tribute of many new millions from the widows and orphans of England. As *finis* to all which, he has wound up by the horrors of Bulgaria, and such savageries as are without a parallel. With these weighty aggravations, the Turkish Question returns upon us anew, and demands a solution.

It seems to me that something very different from war on his behalf is what the Turk now pressingly needs from England and from all the world; namely, to be peremptorily informed that we can stand no more of his attempts to govern in Europe, and that he must *quàm primum* turn his face to the eastward, for ever quit this side of the Hellespont, and give up his arrogant ideas of governing anybody but himself.

Such immediate and summary expulsion of the Turk from Europe may appear to many a too drastic remedy; but to my mind it is the only one of any real validity under the circumstances. Improved management of these unhappy countries might begin on the morrow after this long-continued curse was withdrawn, and the ground left free for wise and honest human effort. The peaceful Mongol inhabitants would, of course, be left in peace, and treated with perfect equity, and even friendly consideration; but the governing Turk, with all his Pachas and Bashi-Bazouks, should at once be ordered to disappear from Europe and never to return.

This result is in the long run inevitable, and it were better to set about it now than to temporize and haggle in the vain hope of doing it cheaper some other time.

As to the temporary or preparatory government of the recovered provinces, cleared of their unspeakable Turk (government for twenty, or say any other term of years), our own experience in India may prove that it is possible, and in a few faithful and skilful hands is even easy. Nor in the temper of the Czar and of the Austrian Emperor need the fair partition of these recovered territories be a cause of quarrel. Austria must expect to become more and more a Slavick and Hungarian Empire, her nine millions of Germans more and more

gravitating towards their countrymen of the great German Empire. The Czar, whose serious task it is to protect the Christian subjects in Turkey proper, will justly have a claim to territorial footing in the recovered country. To England there is one vital interest, and one only, that of securing its road to India, which depends on Egypt and the Suez Canal.

The thing to be desired is concord among the three Great Powers; and if, as we do hope, there is a mutual trust grounded on honesty of intention on the part of each, none claiming more than in the nature of things belongs to him, we may confidently expect that the difficulties of the business cannot prove insuperable. It seems to me the advice of Prince Bismarck, a magnanimous, noble, and deep-seeing man, who has no national aims or interests in the matter, might be very valuable; nay, were he appointed arbiter where difficult dissidences arose, what but benefit would be likely to result? But on this portion of the subject I am not called to write.

The only clear advice I have to give is, as I have stated, that the unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question, and the country left to honest European guidance; delaying which can be profitable or agreeable only to gamblers on the Stock Exchange, but distressing and unprofitable to all other men.

I remain always, dear Howard, yours truly,

T. CARLYLE.

The Conference assembled in St. James's Hall on the 8th of December, and was worthy of the eminent and distinguished persons who had joined in convening it. The great Hall was crowded in every corner by men who had come up at the summons from every part of the country, nearly every one of whom was a person of political influence or of social consideration in his district. The Liberal leaders from the great constituencies found themselves side by side with neighbours whose votes had often gone for the Conservatives; the Dissenting minister found himself for once in sympathy with the Ritualistic clergyman; and quakers and soldiers sat down together. On the platform the mingling of men of various views and

positions was still more marked. So various and distinguished an assembly had probably never been gathered in the interest of any political movement since the greatest days of the Anti-Corn Law League. Yet there had been some little doubt whether the Conference need meet at all. Its work was half done before it could come together. The Government had entirely abandoned the policy which had isolated England, by entering into the Conference at Constantinople; and there seemed to be every reason to believe that the Guildhall speech represented rather the mind of Lord Beaconsfield than the attitude of the Ministry as a whole. Still, nobody then knew what position Lord Salisbury would take at Constantinople, nor what was the exact tenour of the instructions he had received. Had Lord Derby published those instructions on the morning of the 8th of December he might almost have divided the honours of the day with Mr. Gladstone himself. "What we want to do," said Mr. Gladstone, in his great speech in the evening meeting, "is to cut Lord Salisbury adrift from the Guildhall speech." Lord Salisbury had been already cut clean adrift from it by Lord Derby's own hand before he started on his travels.

The Duke of Westminster, who presided over the morning Conference, expressed confidence in Lord Salisbury; and Lord Shaftesbury in opening the evening sitting based on Lord Derby's despatch to Sir Henry Elliot, in which he denounced the horrors of the Bulgarian massacres, an appeal for confidence in him. "Lord Derby cannot recede from his own

despatch," said Lord Shaftesbury, "nor do I believe that he desires it. I have a high opinion of Lord Derby, he is a man of intelligence, a man of honour, a man with a strong sense of duty. We are deeply indebted to him. His despatch has saved us a world of talk about principles, precedents, interventions and the like; his despatch is one sustained answer to political logic, and intervention is treated in it as beyond question, a thing of course, an irresistible obligation." The meeting received these remarks with loud cheers, though it was less ready to suffer the exhortation based on them to "forget and forgive." "Forget and Forgive!" exclaimed Mr. Fawcett, speaking at a later period of the meeting; "forget their want of moral courage; forget their want of statesmanlike capacity; forget that they did everything which they could do—and they would be doing it now if we had not checked them—to associate the name of England with the most abominable cruelties that ever disgraced Europe, and to associate her with the most detestable Government that ever afflicted mankind. Forgive! There is one among them at least who ought never to be forgiven. And that Minister—I like to speak plainly—is the Prime Minister. When an English Minister comes forward and says that men who have rendered illustrious and never-to-be-forgotten services to their country have done things worse than these terrible crimes perpetrated by the Turk—you, Mr. Gladstone, may forgive it, but not we. You know that I have not been always entirely a thorough supporter of yours,

but if the political differences between us had been a hundred times greater than they have been, I say I should have been wanting in every feeling of generosity and magnanimity—I should have been wanting in every sentiment of gratitude to one who has rendered great services to my country, if I did not take the opportunity of the largest, and perhaps one of the most influential assemblies of my countrymen that I shall ever have the privilege of addressing, of saying that the author of such charges as those ought not to be and cannot be forgiven.”

Perhaps the speech which was most quoted in after days was that of Mr. E. A. Freeman, who had been conspicuous through the whole agitation of the autumn by the able and eloquent, if not always temperate, letters in which he had attacked Lord Derby and the policy he was supposed to represent; and by his speeches at various public meetings. Replying to the threat of war in the Prime Minister's Guildhall speech he asked, “Would they wage a campaign of a single hour—would they give one drop of English blood, or one penny of English treasure, in order to prop up the greatest and bloodiest fabric of wrong that a shuddering world ever saw? Would they draw the sword for the integrity and independence of the Empire of Sodom? Would they go to war that the oppressed might never be relieved, that the enslaved Christian nations might never be set free from the abiding martyrdom of ages? Would they go to war to hinder the most glorious temple of Christendom from again witnessing the rites of

Christian worship? Would they who had compassed sea and land to put down the slave trade, rivet the fetters of the slave in order that the wicked traffic in human flesh might still go on to supply their barbarian ally with victims of his hideous lust? Was it for such objects that English Christians and the countrymen of Canning and Wilberforce were called upon to fight? They were told that the treaty bound them to do so. He did not so read the treaty; but if that was the meaning, he would ask why a treaty which bound them to wrong should be the only treaty to be observed. To observe such a treaty would make them like Herod, who, for his oath's sake, sent a guiltless man for slaughter. They were told that the interests of England in India demanded that the treaty should be observed. He answered, Let duty come first and interest second. Perish the interests of England, and perish her dominion in India, rather than she should strike one blow on behalf of Turkey, on behalf of the wrong against the right." In their connection, as they were spoken, these last words are natural enough. They express the noble resolution which every honest man makes when he is asked to connive at hideous and execrable wrong-doing; and every freeman utters when he is invited to do the bidding of a hated oppressor. But such expressions read in cold blood and by unsympathizing eyes, easily lend themselves to misrepresentation, and every possible dishonest use has consequently been made of Mr. Freeman's words. People who are incapable of understanding the feeling

expressed in the old motto *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*, might accuse the just man of wishing to pull down the pillars of the firmament, and in the same spirit they accused Mr. Freeman of desiring to sacrifice India. "Perish India" has ever since been the motto which the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and those whose political hysteria it represents, have put into the mouths of those who wish for justice to be done on the oppressors and on behalf of the oppressed populations of the East.

The great speech of the evening was, of course, Mr. Gladstone's, which took up and reflected to the world the whole spirit of one of the most striking political assemblages the present generation has seen. Speaking of Lord Salisbury's mission and Lord Beaconsfield's Guildhall speech, Mr. Gladstone said—"That speech was heard by Lord Salisbury. It was his privilege, or his doom, to hear it. It was not in his power to qualify or to contradict it. An arrangement had evidently been made—a very convenient and proper arrangement on an occasion of that kind—that, in answering toasts, one, and one only—the head of the Government—should enter on the general question of policy. But although Lord Salisbury could not qualify or contradict that speech, I think no one who entertains for him—and thousands outside these walls entertain for him, men who have hesitated to join your movement—the feelings we all entertain, can doubt that the hearing of that speech must have been to him a painful operation. We have a right to ask, does that Guildhall speech or does it not constitute

any part of the instructions of Lord Salisbury? We do not know what his instructions are, but we know this, that the declarations of the head of the Government, declarations made on that great annual occasion, are most solemn and authentic documents. If Lord Salisbury is to act in the spirit of that Guildhall speech, he will disappoint the expectations which not only you entertain, but all his adherents of whatever politics entertain who look for a just and pacific solution of this great question. We want to cut him adrift from that Guildhall speech. We want to separate between it and him; we want him to go to Constantinople to represent the honour and not the dishonour of England, and we think that if, as we believe, we are speaking in conformity with the convictions of the great masses of the people, we have a perfect right to meet and to denounce these evils, and to frustrate any transaction which would lead the country to nothing but disaster and disgrace. We believe we have a perfect right to endeavour to secure to a high-minded man, who has undertaken at the last moment a task of the utmost difficulty, a fair and clear stage, by showing him that we know the conditions, and we know his own qualifications, and that we wish to assist him to maintain the honour of his country, and to minister to the welfare of the East."

Mr. Gladstone's generous words were hardly out of his mouth before the high-minded course Lord Salisbury was taking began to appear. All the credit of his action was, however, given to him and none of it to Lord Derby. Nobody seemed to suspect that in

joining with the other Powers in demanding from the Porte effectual guarantees for internal Reforms, Lord Salisbury was acting on his instructions. The Guildhall speech, as Mr. Gladstone intimated, overshadowed the whole question, and nobody dreamed that the Prime Minister would threaten war for the "independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire," while the Foreign Secretary was issuing instructions to set the Sultan's independence at nought. Two months later the world knew that these words in Lord Beaconsfield's mouth had no meaning; that he had only used them to bring down Guildhall cheers, and to please the fire-eaters of his party in Parliament and in the Press. But during those two months the public mystification was complete, and when on the 8th of January Lord Salisbury telegraphed home that Midhat Pacha believed he could calculate on Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield, it was generally taken as a rebuke to them for their supposed lukewarm support of their Envoy's reforming zeal. The confidence in Lord Salisbury expressed at the National Conference rapidly strengthened as the negotiations went on, and was fed by the incessant accusations of treachery made by the pro-Turkish party against him. He became the popular member of the Cabinet, and even after he came home it was generally believed that the failure of the Conference was due to Sir Henry Elliot's lukewarmness, which, encouraged from home, had reduced to powerlessness Lord Salisbury's zeal.

The opinion that Lord Salisbury had thus been checkmated from home was universal in January; and

the inference from it was that he and Lord Beaconsfield were opposed to each other. On the evening of the day on which Parliament was opened, an eager throng consequently gathered in the House of Lords to hear something more than dull expositions of diplomatic doings. A line of ladies looked down from the narrow gallery round three sides of the House, the steps of the Throne were occupied by a distinguished crowd; and all the other parts devoted to members of Parliament, strangers, and outsiders, were equally full. There was much curiosity to see the Prime Minister on his first appearance as a peer; but there was much more to see the meeting between him and Lord Salisbury, now that they were, at last, face to face at Philippi. The loud rumours of differences between them had got countenance from the severe and disdainful criticisms of some of the Government papers on Lord Salisbury's doings. An unpleasant passage of arms was therefore anticipated between them, or at least a vindication of himself by Lord Salisbury at the expense of his chief. But the expectations were disappointed. There was an able debate, to which Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury contributed very short speeches, but the main feature of which was a complete explanation from Lord Derby. Lord Granville had said, after reviewing the transactions of the recess, and quoting the satisfactory statements of Mr. Cross and Sir Stafford Northcote, that he hoped their words represented the altered policy of the Government. Lord Derby in reply denied that the Government had changed their policy, but

admitted that "the circumstances being different we have, in some degree, altered our course of action to meet those altered conditions."* He took upon himself the whole responsibility of the course taken at the Conference, and adhered to the opinion that we should neither attempt to coerce the Turks nor aid them in resisting coercion by Russia. Lord Beaconsfield, who said he spoke reluctantly, spoke with studied moderation in the same sense, and Lord Salisbury followed in a speech which was the somewhat louder echo of the mild words of the Prime Minister.

In the House of Commons there was a livelier discussion. Lord Hartington put together the declarations of the Home Secretary and of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and contrasted them with the Guildhall speech and with the tone of the Government in the previous Session. The Chancellor replied by quoting Lord Salisbury's instructions to show that they were in the same sense as his own declarations, and maintained that there had been no change of policy. Mr. Gladstone replied that "in the present policy of Her Majesty's Government I now recognize, not all I could desire, not all that I could hope to see in the future, but certain great facts for which we formerly looked in vain. There is, in the first place, an acknowledgment of responsibility. We no longer hear that if ever there was a case for absolute non-interference it is the case of the Sultan and his subjects, as was said by Lord Beaconsfield. We do not now hear, that we have no more to do with the quarrel

* Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 33.

between the Sultan and his subjects than we have to do with any other quarrel between a Sovereign and his people, as was said by Lord Derby. All this is a gain. 'There has been no change of policy?' Never mind. Those things are gone, and we shall, at all events, hear from responsible Ministers no more opinions like those, thanks in no small degree to the much despised Autumn agitation."*

On the 16th of February Mr. Gladstone brought forward the question of our obligations under the Treaty of 1856; maintaining that we were not placed in a humiliating position, as Lord Derby had said in the despatch of the 5th of September,† by the public sentiment hindering the Government from going to war for the Porte. Mr. Gathorne Hardy would not say we were bound to go to war, but vaguely upheld the obligations of the treaties without clearly saying what those obligations were. The debate was memorable for the castigation Mr. Gladstone administered to Mr. Chaplin, the solemn and impressive member for Mid-Lincolnshire. Mr. Chaplin made a bitter personal attack on Mr. Gladstone, asking him if he meant to evade the obligation of justifying his words, and accusing him of "levelling charges and accusations broadcast against his opponents, especially at times when he knew they could not be there to repel them." Urged by frantic cheers from the benches near him, he was going on to say, "there is no other course which is open to a man of honour to follow,"‡ when Colonel

* Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 117.

† See Chap. XI., p. 230.

‡ Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 549.

Mure sprang to his feet simultaneously with Mr. Gladstone, the former declaring this personal attack to be most offensive, and the latter asking whether it was competent to Mr. Chaplin to instruct him as to the only course a man of honour could follow. The Speaker made Mr. Chaplin apologize, and the loud cheers and counter cheers which broke out drew crowds of members into the House. As Mr. Chaplin was concluding there were cries of "Move," the meaning of which he seemed not to understand. Sitting down after a studied peroration, he instantly rose again and moved the adjournment of the debate. This gave Mr. Gladstone an opportunity of speaking, and he stepped to the table saying, "I rise to second the motion," but had to stand several moments before the loud welcoming cheers from the crowded benches on his side of the House allowed him to proceed. He spoke at first with some emotion, but speedily put it aside, and having, by the way, administered a deserved rebuke to Lord George Hamilton, turned the laughter of the whole House on his frowning assailant, and then concluded with an appeal to the sense of English justice on the Eastern Question itself, which drew sympathizing cheers from all parts of the House, and words of warm admiration from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who immediately followed him.

There is no need to reproduce here the replies to Mr. Chaplin and Lord George Hamilton. But the concluding words of the speech have directly to do with the history of the time. They set forth the real motive which animated much of the "Autumn agita-

tion"; and show the lofty spirit in which Mr. Gladstone himself entered on the movement. Speaking of his address at Taunton, where he had asked whether the Government policy was represented by Lord Salisbury or not, he said, "When I read the Blue-books, on which I suspect the honourable gentleman has not spent half as many minutes as I have hours, I find in one page the arguments of Lord Salisbury for a proposition, and in another page those of Sir H. Elliot against it. This is a state of things which impressed me with the belief that it was time yet and time still for the people of Taunton to be upon their guard; and, therefore, so far as my powers of exposition did go, I did endeavour to lay before them that the people of England had still a very great work to do. We have, I think, the most solemn and the greatest question to determine that has come before Parliament in my time. It is only under very rare circumstances that such a question as the question of the East can be fully raised, fully developed, and exhibited, and fully brought home to the minds of men with that force, with that command, with that absorbing power which it ought to exercise over them. In the original entrance of the Turks into Europe, it may be said to have been a turning point in human history. To a great extent it continues to be the cardinal question, the question which casts into the shade every other question, and the question which is now brought before the mind of the country far more fully than at any period of our history, far more fully than even at the time of the Crimean

war, when we were pouring forth our blood and treasure in what we thought to be the cause of justice and right. And I endeavoured to impress upon the minds of that audience, not a blind prejudice against this man or that, but a great watchfulness, and the duty of great activity. It is the duty of every man to feel that he is bound for himself, according to his opportunities, to examine what belongs to this question, with regard to which it never can be forgotten that we are those who set up the power of Turkey in 1854; that we are those who gave her the strength which has been exhibited in the Bulgarian massacres; that we are those who made the treaty arrangements that have secured her for twenty years from almost a single hour of uneasiness brought about by foreign intervention; and that, therefore, nothing can be greater and nothing deeper than our responsibility in the matter. It is incumbent upon us one and all that we do not allow any consideration, either of party or personal convenience, to prevent us from endeavouring to the best of our ability to discharge this great duty; that now, at length, in the East, in the midst of this great opportunity, when all Europe has been called to collective action, when something like European concert has been established, when we learn the deep human interests that are involved in every stage of the question, so far, at least, as England is concerned, every Englishman shall strive to the utmost of his might that justice shall be done.”*

* Hansard, Vol. 232, cols. 557, 558.

The debate, of which this great impromptu speech was an exciting episode, was adjourned; but, on the principle of not speaking to the man at the wheel, it was afterwards allowed to die out. In the meantime there had been a great review of the diplomatic doings of the past recess in the House of Lords, opened by an exhaustive speech from the Duke of Argyll, to which Lord Derby replied, vindicating his own policy, and claiming that "Time and peace may fairly be asked by the Porte to work out its plans; but without peace there can be no hope of success."* Lord Salisbury spoke at some length in explanation of the course taken at the Conference. "Our policy," he said, "is simply this, to try by all peaceable means in our power to induce Turkey to open her eyes to the danger which surrounds her, to awake from her infatuation, and give to the poor populations which have suffered so much, some measure of liberty and safety for life and honour."† The Government were still hopeful that Turkey would open her eyes while there was yet time. Lord Beaconsfield, in the only considerable speech he made during the Session, spoke in a similar sense. He gave a summary of the doings of the Government, with a special view to show the agreement between himself and Lord Salisbury. "He is supposed not to have the confidence of his colleagues because he seems to have been attacked in some newspapers generally supporting the Administration, and because his colleagues have not written leading articles in his defence. Every public man is liable to such

* Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 670.

† Id., col. 697.

attacks. No one has been more attacked in the public newspapers than myself. I dare say I have had as many leading articles, mainly of a vituperative nature, written against me as any one ever had; and yet I declare upon my honour that I do not know a single colleague who ever wrote a single line in my defence." In a later part of the speech he vindicated Lord Salisbury from the charge of having failed at the Conference. "Allow me to say, when we are told that the Conference was a failure, that certainly there was no failure of my noble friend in the principal object of his visit to Constantinople. When he went there, what was the situation? Then the first *sine quâ non* was that Bulgaria should be occupied by a Russian army. We had a great many other demands of a similar kind. Who succeeded in obtaining the withdrawal of those unreasonable proposals? Why, my noble friend. My noble friend fell only into one error, which I should have fallen into myself, and I believe every member of this House would have done the same. He gave too much credit to the Turks for common-sense, and he could not believe that when he made so admirable an arrangement in their favour, they would have lost so happy an opportunity."*

These speeches, and similar assurances given in the House of Commons, had a reassuring effect on the public mind. Lord Beaconsfield, indeed, fell into his inevitable inaccuracies. The distinguished company who heard his words could detect these flaws, but the public outside had not the full means of doing so.

* Hansard, Vol. 232, cols. 725, 726.

Everybody knew, of course, that it was not the absence of any earlier vindication of Lord Salisbury which had raised the general suspicion of differences between him and the Prime Minister, but the fact that the attacks had appeared, and continued to appear, in the Government organs. The papers which were every day praising Lord Beaconsfield were the very papers which in the same articles accused Lord Salisbury of treachery to his colleagues. But everybody did not then know that the proposal of Russia for a military occupation of Bulgaria had never been made a *sine quâ non*, but had been expressly declared not to be so at the moment at which it was put forward.* As to Lord Salisbury's too great faith in the Turks, Lord Beaconsfield must have known that England had two representatives in the Conference, and that, as Mr. Gladstone had pointed out in his reply to Mr. Chaplin,† all the arguments which Lord Salisbury put were answered in the Conference itself by Sir Henry Elliot. The common-sense of the Turks told them that the English Government had no policy; that Sir Henry Elliot represented the inclinations of the Prime Minister, as shown in his speeches in the House of Commons, at Aylesbury, and in the Guildhall, while Lord Salisbury represented only the mood into which public feeling at home had forced them, and in which they were assuming a virtue though they had it not. This was the view the Turks took of their doings all through these transactions. It was a false view as far as Lord Derby was concerned, but it was a true

* See Chap. XII., p. 244.

† Ante, p. 275.

view as regards Lord Beaconsfield; and the mistake the Turks made was in under-estimating the power of public opinion and over-estimating the Prime Minister's strength.

Lord Beaconsfield's inaccuracies did not affect the meaning of the official declarations made in these debates as to the attitude of the Government. It was clear to everybody that they were borrowing the policy of their opponents; though they had got but half way through their lesson, and were at present reluctant to continue it. The plea of non-interference had been dropped. The talk of preserving the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire, though the words had been used again in the Queen's Speech, had been left behind. The very echo of the warlike threats of the Guildhall oration had died away into the infinite distance of three months ago. Mr. Gladstone indeed pointed out, continually, that it was not enough to refuse to sustain the Turks in their oppression; that the Christian populations needed something more than the cold pity which advised their masters to treat them kindly, but put forth no hand to shield them; and that it was as impolitic as it was unkind to leave Russia to effect a deliverance which we had declared to be needful, but had refused to help. The Government, however, and perhaps a large portion of the people, were in no mood for further action; and Russia was allowed to effect that emancipation by a bloody war which England could have effected without a blow by merely sending the Fleet to the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SESSION OF MISTAKES.

THE year 1877 was in many respects a turning point in our domestic history. It opened cheerfully. Trade was bad, but there were signs of recovery. The Revenue Returns, published on Monday morning, the 1st of January, showed that the spending power of the people had not been materially reduced. Customs and Excise had yielded less in the last quarter of 1876 than in the corresponding quarter of 1875; but for the nine months of the financial year which had then expired there was an increase on the same nine months of the preceding financial year. We were selling our goods to foreigners at a less price, but we were paying them a smaller price for necessaries we bought of them; and the general fall in the cost of coal, provisions, and even of manufactured articles, more than compensated for the diminution in wages which had taken place in most departments of industry. Railway traffic kept up, and there was every prospect that the half-year's dividends would be maintained, so that the large classes who live on the returns from these and other investments were actually better off than they had been in the years of prosperity which the country was leaving behind it. There was little to

occupy the public mind, except the questions which were rising in the East, and these seemed to promise peaceful if not speedy settlement, as the mild new year came in with soft south-westerly winds. The Funds had gone up when the news of the prolongation of the armistice came, and on new year's morning it was announced that Lord Salisbury had told the Sultan that the British Fleet would be withdrawn from Besika Bay, lest it should seem by its presence there to countenance his refusal to bow to the voice of United Europe, as expressed in the proposals of the Conference. Sir Stafford Northcote, speaking at Liverpool, whither he had gone with Mr. Cross and Lord Sandon, "because for us Conservatives, when we are in a difficulty, there is no tonic like the air of Lancashire," said that when their colleague came back the Government would confer with him as to the policy in the East. Public attention was chiefly directed to the counting of the Presidential votes in the United States, and to the Rev. Arthur Tooth. Mr. Tooth gained an easy notoriety by setting up the Mass in Masquerade in his Church at Hatcham; and showing the uselessness of the much boasted Act to put down Ritualism.

The Lancashire tonic braced the nerves of the Ministers, but no more cured the difficulty for which it was taken than the mountebank's pills cured the earthquake. Parliament was opened on the 8th of February by the Queen in person. There was an unusual crowd to witness the spectacle, which took place in the brightest sunshine. Loud cheers greeted

Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield when they were recognized as they passed through the throng. The Queen's Speech was read by Lord Cairns, and partook of the prevailing tone of political discussion. It told, in the usual series of bald paragraphs, the steps taken in relation to the Turkish Empire, especially noting that the Government had "thought it right, after inquiry into the facts, to denounce to the Porte the excesses ascertained to have been committed in Bulgaria, and to express my reprobation of their perpetrators." The object of the Government in the various negotiations entered upon was explained to be—"to maintain the peace of Europe and to bring about the better government of the disturbed provinces, without infringing upon the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire." The failure of these efforts was hinted rather than disguised in the statement that "the proposals recommended by myself and my allies have not, I regret to say, been accepted by the Porte; but the result of the Conference has been to show the existence of a general agreement among the European Powers which cannot fail to have a material effect upon the condition and government of Turkey." The armistice had been prolonged, and might yet lead to an honourable peace. "In all these affairs," added the Speech, "I have acted in cordial co-operation with my allies, with whom, as with other Foreign Powers, my relations continue to be of a friendly character." The assumption of the Imperial title at Delhi, the famine in the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, and the hos-

ILITIES between the Transvaal Government and the neighbouring tribes, which had caused serious apprehensions in South Africa, were the other topics of the foreign part of the Speech.

Domestic Legislation had a larger share of the Speech this year than it had in that of the year before. The Universities Bill and the Prisons Bill were promised again, and of course a Bankruptcy Bill and a Patents Bill. The Valuation of Property Bill, one for the simplification and amendment of the law relating to Factories and Workshops, a Summary Jurisdiction Bill, legislation respecting Roads and Bridges in Scotland and the Scotch Poor Law, the Irish Judicature Bill, and a measure "to confer an equitable jurisdiction on the County Courts in that country," completed the list. There was something new and ominous in this making the Queen speak of Ireland as "that country," instead of describing it as that part of the United Kingdom; but nobody noticed it, and it passed. But if the Queen herself is made to speak of Ireland as though it were another country, the demand that it shall have separate legislative institutions may acquire new force and meaning.

The discussions which immediately followed on the Eastern Question have already been described. There was no reason why foreign topics should have overshadowed domestic legislation to so large an extent, but that the Government was not unwilling they should do so. The promised Bills, and others not foreshadowed, were, however, duly introduced, and work enough for a busy Session was begun. Mr.

Cross led the way with his Prisons Bill, which was the measure of last year, slightly modified. On the same evening Mr. Gathorne Hardy brought in the Universities Bill, and the Lord Advocate the Scotch Prisons Bill. Mr. Selater Booth got his Valuation Bill well forward by introducing it on the 12th of February. On the same day the Attorney-General described his Patents Bill; the Lord Advocate brought in his Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Bill; and Mr. Plunket, the Irish Solicitor-General, got his Irish Judicature Bill and an Irish County Officers and Courts Bill read a first time. The Maritime Contracts Bill was re-introduced on the 16th of February; the Bill for the appointment of additional Judges followed on the 27th of February; the Lord Chancellor's Bankruptcy Bill on the 2nd of March, and the Lord President brought in his Burial Acts Consolidation Bill on the 13th.

A Session in which the business was thus got early in hand ought to have seen a large part of it successfully treated. But the Government had no legislative zeal, and its House of Commons' majority did not like the Bills for which it showed a preference. In the House of Lords, the Prime Minister was so silent that rumours of his probable retirement got abroad; and people asked one another, "Where is Lord Beaconsfield?" During March he never opened his lips except to propose, in a few words, the second reading of a Money Bill. In the volume of Hansard which records the doings of Parliament from the 16th of March to the 26th of April, his name only

occurs once, when he spoke for a few minutes on the 19th of April, in answer to Lord Enfield's motion on the defective sanitary condition of many of the Public Offices. On the 27th of April he made a speech of some length on legislation for the prevention of Railway Accidents, which he described as "a great subject—perhaps the greatest domestic subject that can come under your consideration." * Lord Bury had called attention to the Report of the Royal Commission on Railway Accidents, and moved a resolution against carrying out its recommendations. Lord Beaconsfield, in opposing the resolution, urged further delay, to enable the Railway Companies themselves to carry out the improvements which the public safety required, leaving the threat of compulsory legislation as a spur to prick the sides of their intent. He then relapsed again into silence till the 18th of June, when he said a few words in reply to Lord Granville, and against a clause which the Archbishop of York proposed to add to the Burials Bill, to relieve the clergy from the obligation to read the Service over persons of scandalously immoral life. A mere promise of the Bill on the subject of the Telegraphs on the 6th of July; the speech on the Pigott scandal on the 19th; and a few remarks on the communications with Russia on the 9th of August, make up the whole of his contributions to public discussion between the end of February and the close of the Session. It is not surprising, therefore, that the public believed he was letting the reins fall into other and younger hands.

* Hansard, Vol. 234, col. 14.

The House of Lords gained nothing by the Prime Minister's transference to it; but it was soon felt that the House of Commons had lost much. Sir Stafford Northcote has many excellent qualities and some gifts, but he has not the art of governing men. His leadership of the House of Commons might have been successful in times when there was important business to be done, and a large majority at the leader's back anxious to do it; when the momentum of active and successful work carries everybody along, and there are no idle hands to be tempted into mischief. But Sir Stafford Northcote's leadership fell on times which were, in all respects, the reverse of this. No great measures were attempted; and the small Bills the Government brought in were not liked by its own supporters. There was no sense of movement; no satisfaction of activity; nothing to relieve the weary hours of legislative monotony but a personal altercation or an outbreak of disorder. In such times only a man of genius, by virtue of a great power of personal fascination, could have kept the House of Commons in order. Sir Stafford Northcote has no spark of genius and no commanding personal authority. He is painstaking, accurate, conscientious, courteous; he is a cultivated speaker, is not without a certain readiness in debate, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer he has shown a considerable facility in the handling of figures. But he sometimes shows signs of hesitancy, and a kicking team soon knows that the hand on the reins lacks firmness and resolution. When he has to assert himself, instead

of withering his opponent with a flash of Mr. Gladstone's scorn, or overwhelming him with Mr. Disraeli's ridicule, he is apt to seem a little petulant and pedagogic, and a naughty world is tempted to sympathize with the offender he rebukes. This is nearly half the story of "obstruction"; and perhaps the other half will be told when it is added that what has been obstructed is work which those who were about it did, not because they wished it done, but because they were anxious to be seen of their constituents and of the country in doing it. To do nothing while seeming to do much; to make the Session barren, and have a group of Irishmen on whom to throw the blame, is the ideal of legislative life on the Conservative benches below the gangway. Sir Stafford Northcote's failure in leading a House in which such idlers are in force on one side, and Mr. Biggar and Mr. Parnell are ready on the other, is his misfortune rather than his fault.

One of the worst blunders of the Session was due to the halting policy of the Government. On the 12th of February Mr. Richard Smyth, who had taken time by the forelock, moved the Second Reading of his Bill for closing public-houses on Sunday all over Ireland. The Government met it by the admission, in the first place, that the proposal of last year to exempt from its operation all towns of 10,000 inhabitants and upwards had not been favourably received. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach proposed to assent to the principle of entire Sunday closing, and therefore to the Second Reading of Mr. Smyth's

Bill, on condition that it was at once referred to a Select Committee, which should inquire into the applicability of the measure to Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. The Committee sat, and reported the Bill without the exemption of these five cities, by the 10th of May. The Government took no notice of the Report, and on the 14th of June Mr. Smyth asked what they meant to do to facilitate further progress. Sir Stafford Northcote made a hesitating reply, the substance of which was that they would do nothing. A warm debate followed, in which Mr. Gladstone pointed out that the Bill, having been accepted by Her Majesty's Ministers on principle, had special claims upon them which they ought to recognize, and Mr. Bright made a strong appeal to them to pass it. A few days later Mr. Smyth got a promise from Sir Stafford Northcote that if the Bill were put down for the 27th of June, he would move that the Orders of the Day be postponed in its favour, and if the Wednesday sitting was not enough for the debate he would find a morning sitting for it. The Bill was meanwhile recommitted to the Select Committee for the removal of some unauthorized changes they had made in it, and on the 27th it came before the House again. It was at once met by dilatory motions and speeches. There was a wrangle and a division over the postponement of the Orders. Mr. Murphy then spoke for two hours in moving a hostile resolution, which Mr. Roebuck supported. This debate occupied the whole morning, and at half-past five there was a division on a motion

of adjournment which was defeated by 256 against 37; but as soon as the numbers were announced, the debate stood adjourned by the lapse of time. The discussion was resumed in the Tuesday morning sitting on the 3rd of July, when the question of going into Committee was debated all the morning, and the Bill was talked out by Mr. O'Sullivan. The Government declined to find any other day to resume the debate, and in a long conversation on the 12th of July Lord Hartington blamed the Ministers for adopting the Bill, and then failing to support it, and said, "they must be perfectly aware that they are inviting that kind of opposition which would prevent the passing of the measure."* They were, in fact, playing with obstruction in thus allowing a Bill which, as Mr. Bright said, had nearly the whole House in its favour, to be hustled over the edge of the Session by a small knot of some twenty or thirty members.

The same inability either to take up questions or to let them alone, led to still worse mismanagement in a matter of almost equal importance. The dealings of the Government with the subject of County Boards tell a whole story of legislative weakness. It was pledged to legislation on this subject, but as the pledge was only given to the tenant farmers, there seemed no disposition to redeem it. Mr. Clare Read consequently brought forward, on the 9th of March, a resolution levelled at the Valuation Bill, which declared "that no readjustment of local administration will be satisfactory or complete

* Hansard, Vol. 235, col. 1190.

which does not refer County Business, other than that relating to the administration of justice, and the maintenance of order, to a Representative County Board." The Ministers at first determined on opposing this motion, and an urgent whip was sent out to their faithful supporters, assuring them that there would be a division of great importance. The Opposition on their side sent out a whip in Mr. Read's support; and there was consequently a large assemblage of members and every expectation of a close division. But close divisions have been the terror of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration. Their majority must be kept together at whatever cost. Mr. Clare Read might have been defeated; on the other hand he might defeat the Government, as Sir Massey Lopes, on a kindred question, defeated the Government of Mr. Gladstone. The danger was met by a change of front. As soon as the motion was put Mr. Selater-Booth rose, made a vague speech, in which, Lord Hartington said, he "argued most steadily against the proposal,"* and then, to everybody's astonishment, ended by saying that he understood Mr. Read "had no wish to press the Government immediately to embody the spirit of the Resolution in a Bill; nor did he wish at once to sketch out a plan of the reforms which would be necessary in order to meet his views. He would only say, therefore, that the Government would not be unmindful of what had been set forth, and as far as the present moment was concerned, they were willing to agree to

* Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 1724.

the motion.”* In this way defeat was staved off, but Mr. Clare Read and his friends got less than nothing by their victory.

The three Prisons Bills, for England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively, probably did as much in the way of harassing the squires as any Government could undertake in a single Session. Mr. Cross brought in his Bill on the first available night, and got it read a second time within a week. The Bill was vigorously denounced by Mr. Newdegate as an invasion of local liberties; a view in which he agreed with Mr. P. Rylands, Sir Sydney Waterlow and other Liberal members. It was, however, very similar to some proposals which had been put forward by a Committee of the House of Lords a dozen years before; and it has certainly effected considerable economy in the administration of our Prisons. It makes the Prisons national instead of purely local institutions, puts them under centralized instead of localized authority, and charges their cost on the Consolidated Fund instead of on the rates. In doing this it disestablishes the county justices, takes from them their prison patronage and puts it in the hands of the Government; and makes even their visiting authority subordinate to the Secretary of State and to officials appointed by him. There was a long fight over the clauses in Committee, in which the Irish members asserted their right to deal with the measure in minute detail—a right which it would not only be unwise but unconstitutional to dispute.

* Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 1683.

Mr. Parnell, no doubt, dragged in the cases of Rossa, Murphy, and other Irish Fenians, with needless and tiresome iteration; but it was found that he had applied an acute intellect to a careful and minute study of the bearings of the Bill, and a large number of his amendments were actually embodied in the measure. The chief objection to the Bill, which was urged by Mr. Rylands, Mr. Dodson, and other Liberal members of the House of Commons, and reiterated by Lord Kimberley in the House of Lords, is that it goes in the direction of limiting instead of developing local and municipal administration, and that it was defended by arguments which, in Lord Kimberley's words, would "equally apply to every branch of local administration," and "might lead to the abolition of local management throughout the country."*

The Universities Bill was another of the successful measures of the year. Like the Prisons Bill, it was a legacy of the previous Session; but the two Bills of 1876 had been rolled into one in 1877. It was introduced and read a second time without a division, very early in the Session. There were, however, a series of very close divisions in Committee, in attempts to liberalize and extend the two bodies of Commissioners. Mr. Goschen proposed to add the name of the Rev. Bartholomew Price, Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy, to the Oxford Commissioners, but was defeated by a majority of eleven. Mr. Grant Duff suggested the name of Professor

* Hansard, Vol. 235, col. 389.

Huxley, but it was rejected by a majority of 34. He then proposed Professor Max Müller, who was rejected by a majority of 24. To the Cambridge Commission, Lord Hartington moved the addition of the name of the Rev. Dr. Bateson, Master of St. John's College, but the Government again resisted, and Lord Hartington was defeated by a majority of 26. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice proposed Dr. Hooker, President of the Royal Society; and Sir William Harcourt, who spoke amid noisy interruptions, declared that "the rejection of the names of these eminent men, with silent contempt, was a scandalous proceeding,"* and he refused to withdraw the word. Dr. Hooker's name was rejected by a majority of 32. Sir Charles Dilke was also defeated by the narrow majority of 28 on an amendment for empowering the Commissioners to alter the qualifications for membership of Congregation at Oxford, and for admission to the Electoral roll of Cambridge; and for limiting or abrogating the power of Convocation at Oxford, and of the Senate at Cambridge, to regulate the studies of the University. The object of this amendment was to emancipate these Universities from the control of men who stand in no practical relation to their work; and who are sent for by the local reactionaries from country parsonages and distant towns to vote down all proposals for improvement. "In old days," said Sir Charles Dilke, "Convocation had only been attended by the residents, and they proposed once more to make the University what it had been."†

* Hansard, Vol. 233, col. 2009.

† Id., Vol. 234, col. 287.

There was a much greater debate, and a closer division, on the question of Clerical Headships and Fellowships. Mr. Goschen proposed that the Commissioners should provide, in statutes made by them for a College, "that the entering into or being in Holy Orders shall not be the condition of the holding of any Headship or Fellowship." The amendment was supported by Mr. Gladstone and by Lord Hartington. It was feebly resisted by the Government, some of whose supporters declined to vote. The debate showed that these clerical restrictions are doomed to speedy removal, and Mr. Goschen's Amendment was defeated on division by the narrow majority of nine.

There was a still further sign of the growing dislike of clerical and ecclesiastical exclusiveness in the fate of the Burials Bill. The narrow divisions on Mr. Osborne Morgan's Bill in the previous Session had made the clergy anxious to get this question settled while a Conservative Government was still in power. There had been agitation about it all the autumn; and the Archbishop of Canterbury said many petitions had been sent to him, one having a double column of signatures seven yards long, urging on him and the Bishops its speedy settlement. The Duke of Richmond's Bill was a response to these appeals. It was an attempt to get rid of the controversy without getting rid of the grievance which caused it. It was meant to satisfy the uneasy consciences of those who dislike exclusiveness, without giving Dissenters the right of burial with their own

services in the parish churchyards. This could only be done by forcing the parishes to provide unconsecrated grounds in which Dissenters could be buried by their own ministers. The Bill began by consolidating all the existing Burial Acts, and treating the whole question as one of sanitary legislation. The Vestry, or a Committee of the Vestry, or the Sanitary Authority of a parish or of a group of parishes, was to be constituted the Burial Authority of the district, with the obligation to provide grounds in which all persons could be buried. As it was known that most of these Authorities would resolve at once that there was ample room in the Churchyard, and would refuse to put the ratepayers to the expense of a second burial ground, the Bill contained elaborate provisions for compelling them to act. They were specially directed to see that there was sufficient burial space, both consecrated and unconsecrated; and on a requisition from one-twentieth of the ratepayers, representing that there was not sufficient and suitable provision in the parish for Burials, the Secretary of State could step in and order the provision of "sufficient and suitable" ground. Half a score of influential people in a parish, who objected to the performance of Nonconformist funerals in the parish churchyard, could, therefore, force the parish to tax itself for a new burying ground, not because space was wanted, but because the claim of the Dissenters to burial in the churchyard could then be more successfully resisted. The Bill, however, did not contemplate that even with this severity of compulsion all parishes

would be provided with duplicate burial grounds, and it therefore enacted, in the 74th clause, that if the friends of a deceased person objected to the services of the clergyman the funeral might be conducted in silence.

This scheme pleased nobody but its inventors—and the Bishops. Parochial authorities asked why they should have a burial rate imposed on them for the purpose of keeping up a clerical monopoly in the parish churchyard. Dissenters of all kinds resented the silent burial proposal as an insult. Lord Granville met the Second Reading with a resolution declaring that no amendment of the law of Burial would be satisfactory which did not enable the relatives or friends having charge of the funeral, “to conduct such funeral in any churchyard in which the deceased had a right of interment, with such Christian and orderly religious observances as to them may seem fit.” The debate on this motion was made remarkable by speeches from both the Archbishops in favour of some concession to Dissenters; and by a speech and vote of the Bishop of Oxford in favour of Lord Granville’s resolution. Lord Granville was, however, defeated, and the Bill was read a second time by a majority of 39—Contents, 141; Not-contents, 102. There was a long debate on going into Committee, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury again spoke in favour of some concession. The 74th clause had itself in the meanwhile undergone the silent burial it proposed for Dissenters; and the Archbishop expressed his regret that nothing was to be done to meet their just

complaints. "I have expressed my desire to have this matter settled," said the Archbishop, "my reason is my belief that it will be dangerous to the Church of England to leave the matter open any longer. I do not say it is desirable in the abstract to make the concession, but I do say that it is inevitable. Every speaker who has addressed your Lordships on the Second Reading—even those who were in favour of the Bill—said that this concession must sooner or later be made. If, then, it must be made, surely it would be better to make it with a good grace. . . . I for one should regret if we went to a general election with this question open before the country."* The Archbishop of York spoke in the same sense, replying to the Bishop of Peterborough, who suggested that the clergy should be empowered to license Dissenting ministers to perform the services over the members of their own congregations. Lord Teynham, speaking as a Dissenter, claimed equal rights in this matter with Churchmen. In Committee Lord Harrowby proposed the insertion of a clause embodying the substance of Lord Granville's rejected resolution. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Exeter and Oxford voted for it, and eleven Bishops against it, but the lay lords supported it in such strength that the numbers in the division were equal, 102 against 102, and the new clause was consequently not carried. On the Report, Lord Harrowby again moved it, when the Bishop of St. Asaph joined the other two Bishops and the

* Hansard, Vol. 234, col. 1045.

Primate in support of it, and the opposing Bishops were reduced to eight. The Contents were 127, and the Not-contents 111 ; the clause was therefore inserted in the Bill by a majority of 16.

This striking division offered the Government an excellent opportunity for finally getting rid of a long and irritating controversy. The Bill had been carefully elaborated in Committee. It could have been sent down to the Commons in a few days, and would have passed in that House with ease. But Lord Harrowby's new clause made all the rest of the Bill superfluous. There was no need to consolidate the law of Burial if the exclusion of Dissenting services from parish churchyards was not to be kept up. The whole machinery for the provision of new unconsecrated burying grounds was a mere expedient for keeping up the clerical monopoly in the existing consecrated places. The Nonconformists are anxious to bury their dead where their forefathers lie, and their neighbours of the Established Church are equally anxious that those who were divided in life shall at least sleep peacefully together in the grave. Give the rural Nonconformist, therefore, as the majority of the House of Lords desired, the right to hear the voice of his own minister and to receive his own familiar religious consolation at the grave in the old churchyard, and there would be no need for fresh authorities and fresh taxes to make a new one. The Government consequently discovered that the question of the public health as it was affected by the state of the churchyards, was not as urgent as it

had seemed ; and withdrew the Bill. This was done after a short debate, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury again expressed his urgent desire for the settlement of the controversy in the way the majority of the House of Lords had indicated ; and in which the Duke of Richmond and Gordon stated that Lord Harrowby's Amendment was “so contrary to the scheme of the Government, and would so entirely derange the manner in which the Bill was framed, that they must withdraw the measure.” He concluded by saying that “the question was one of great importance, and would receive the careful consideration of the Government during the recess.”* No sign has yet been given that this pledge was ever thought of again.

This abortive Burials Bill was before the House of Lords for fifteen weeks, and meanwhile serious difficulties had arisen with the Irish members in the House of Commons. It is difficult to trace the origin or the early development of the tactics known by the name of “obstruction.” Lord Elcho fought the Purchase Abolition Bill, and the whole Conservative party opposed the Ballot Bill under Mr. Gladstone's Government, by precisely the methods which Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar applied to such measures as the South Africa Bill. In the Session of 1876, Mr. Biggar had, in something like personal pique at his contemptuous treatment by the House, spoken for some four hours in a scarcely audible voice, prolonging his speech by reading copious extracts from Blue-books. In the Session of 1877 he and Mr. Parnell

* Hansard, Vol. 235, col. 186.

had put on the Order Book a large number of amendments to various Government Bills; but in this course they were left far behind by two Liberal-Conservative Scotch members, Mr. Orr Ewing and Sir William Anstruther, who, between them, placed on the Order Book two hundred and fifty amendments to the Scotch Roads and Bridges Bill. Irish obstruction, however, was noisy and was avowedly and purposely undertaken. Mr. Parnell and his few colleagues boasted of it outside the House. "If we had only ten men," he said at a meeting in London in April, "we could stop all their work." They put down amendments to Bills, moved adjournments and forced repeated divisions, not with the legitimate object of improving measures or forcing concessions from an imperious majority, but with the purpose of rendering the effective despatch of public business impossible. The first great fight took place in Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates on the 2nd of July. When the vote for the Army Reserve came on, Mr. O'Connor Power met it with a motion to report progress, on the ground that protests against needless expenditure were never noticed after midnight, and that the people of Ireland had to pay for the English Volunteers but were allowed no Volunteer force of their own. His chief point was, however, that Mr. Hardy would not answer a question about the Irish Volunteers. After a short debate the motion was defeated, only eight members voting for it. Mr. O'Donnell, who pleaded that till the question was answered further supply should not be voted, moved

that the Chairman leave the chair, and this time the Ayes were six and the Noes a hundred and twenty-seven. Major O'Gorman, on the same ground, immediately moved to report progress, and after an hour of wrangling and recrimination interrupted by a count of the House, the motion on a division commanded only five supporters. It was now half-past two, and this little group of seven members, Captain Nolan, Mr. O'Donnell, Major O'Gorman, Mr. O'Connor Power, Mr. R. Power, Mr. Parnell, and Mr. Whalley, kept up the struggle for another four hours and a half, during which they forced fourteen more divisions on alternate motions that the Chairman leave the chair and that progress be reported. The Government meanwhile had kept a House in spite of seven attempts to count it out; but just after seven in the morning Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson, who was the sole occupant of the Treasury Bench, ceased the vain effort to get the Vote passed. Sir Charles Dilke moved that the House be counted, and as fewer than forty members were present the House adjourned, and the Speaker and the wearied officials went home at a quarter past seven in the morning, just a quarter of an hour earlier than the House rose after the celebrated debate on the Address in 1783.

There was a milder outbreak of obstruction on the 5th of July upon the clause in the Irish Judicature Bill providing the salaries of future Judges, and on the Solicitors' Examination Bill which had been sent down from the Lords. On the 23rd of July a debate on Public Business arose on a motion by the Chan-

cellor of the Exchequer, that Government business should have priority on private members' days, Tuesday and Wednesday. This proposal always meets with objection from members who see in it a sentence of death on their own legislative schemes. It now gave an occasion for further protests by Mr. Parnell and Mr. O'Donnell about the neglect of Irish business, and some strong expressions by Mr. Chaplin as to their own conduct. The feeling was rapidly growing, both in and out of the House of Commons, that something must be done to limit the power which the existing forms of the House conferred on a small group of men to obstruct business. This feeling resulted in a feverish impatience, which gave the obstructives the semblance of a grievance, and occasionally involved in a common condemnation with them men who had no desire whatever to obstruct business, and who were only doing their duty in opposing Bills they believed not to be wise. Sensible men on both sides have since seen that the cry of obstruction raised against every man who opposed a Ministerial measure, was only another development of the vicious system of personal government. This was not seen so clearly in the summer of 1877, when the Government majority sometimes showed themselves intolerant even of reasonable opposition, and did much to provoke, though not even then to justify, the unreasonable and unreasoning obstruction they had to overcome.

The greatest outbreak of obstruction which Parliament has yet seen, occurred in the debates on the

South Africa Bill. As in previous Sessions, so in this, the greatest efforts of the Government were directed to the passing of a Bill which was not foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech, and which has hitherto been useless. The South Africa Bill was explained by Lord Carnarvon in moving the Second Reading on the 23rd of April, in one of those speeches which are of permanent historical value for their calm and statesmanlike review of the difficult political situation with which they deal. Ten years before, it had fallen to Lord Carnarvon's lot to move the Second Reading of the Bill which his predecessor Mr. Cardwell had carefully brought into shape, by which Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, were confederated as the Dominion of Canada. The South Africa Bill was the result of less successful negotiations. It provided the outline of a Constitution under which the English colonies and the two great Dutch Republics—the Orange River Free State and the South African Republic, or the Transvaal as it is popularly called, might if they chose confederate themselves under a single general government without losing their local characteristics. But instead of representing an arrangement to which the colonies had themselves agreed beforehand, as was the case with the Canadian Act in 1867, this measure was nothing but an outline to be sent out for approval. In the case of Canada, Mr. Cardwell had got the colonies to go to Parliament, through the Colonial Office, to sanction a Constitution to which they had agreed; in the case of South Africa, Parliament was induced

to elaborate a Constitution and to invite the colonies to adopt it. It was one of those "permissive" measures which the Government of Lord Beaconsfield has substituted for laws. It was an interesting experiment in Constitution-making, which amused and occupied an idle Parliament, but did neither good nor harm, put neither compulsion nor obligation upon anybody. The colonies and the Dutch Republic of South Africa have only to let it alone for five years, and it becomes as useless as the toy constitutions with which the pigeon-holes of the Abbé Siéyès were filled. English legislation presents, perhaps, no such example of wasted zeal as the long fight maintained by the Government on one side and by some Irish members on the other, in elaborating the details of a Constitution destined only to remain among the piles of papers in the Colonial Office, which one Secretary hands over to another till their very history and meaning are forgotten.

The Bill passed through the House of Lords without difficulty, though Lord Grey expressed the opinion that "the state of things in the South African Colonies was utterly unfitted for any such scheme."* Between its Second Reading in the House of Lords and the same stage in the House of Commons, Sir Theophilus Shepstone and his body-guard of twenty-six policemen had annexed the South African Republic to British territory. The annexation had taken place by surprise; and a regiment or so of British troops at once advanced to hold it, lest

* Hansard, Vol. 233, col. 1661.

the Boers, recovering from their momentary astonishment, should make short work of the Commissioner. In moving the Second Reading of the South Africa Bill in the House of Commons, Mr. James Lowther confined himself almost entirely to a defence of this annexation. Mr. Courtney spoke strongly against the annexation, and predicted the complete failure of this Confederation scheme, which, like Lord Grey, he declared to be inapplicable to South Africa. He was supported by Sir Charles Dilke, but the Bill was read a second time by a majority of 62 on a very small division. On the proposal to go into Committee a division took place on an amendment by Sir George Campbell declaring that no Confederation Scheme would be satisfactory which did not make provision for a settlement of the relations of the white and black races. There was a scanty attendance during the debate, and a speech of Mr. Parnell's against the Bill was listened to with impatience. Mr. O'Donnell followed, but the interruptions increased when he went on to ask why such extensive powers of self-government should be offered to the colonies and refused to Ireland. Cries of "Order" and "Question," and attempts to count out the House continued all through a speech of an hour and twenty-five minutes. Mr. Joseph Cowen followed him with an impassioned oration in favour of the Bill, and Mr. Courtney wound up with an appeal to the Government to spare the House the needless labour of going through the amendments, of which Mr. O'Donnell alone had seventy on the notice paper, "and also

spare Parliament the humiliation of putting on the statute book a law which would not be adopted and which was inapplicable to the circumstances of South Africa.”* Only twenty-two members voted against proceeding with the Bill, and among them were Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Earp, Mr. P. Rylands, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. P. Martin, Dr. Cameron, and Mr. Dillwyn, with Sir George Campbell and Mr. Courtney as tellers.

In Committee the Home Rulers took up the opposition to the Bill on the ground that it conferred on colonies who did not want it privileges for which Ireland asked in vain. The House got into Committee in the Wednesday morning sitting on the 25th of July, and the day was spent in a prolonged wrangle resulting in several proposals that words be taken down; and in the actual taking down of words of Mr. Parnell's, “that he has satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect of the Bill.” The Speaker was recalled to the Chair and Mr. Raikes solemnly read the words to him. The Chancellor of the Exchequer then rose and like a schoolboy telling what had happened in the master's absence told the Speaker the story of the quarrel, and ended by moving, “That the honourable member for Meath be suspended from his functions of speaking and taking part in the debates of this House until Friday next.” The Speaker then called on the member for Meath to address the House, but Mr. Biggar rose again and again and was put down

* Hansard, Vol. 235, col. 1790.

by angry cries of "Order." On the fourth call of the Speaker Mr. Parnell rose, and in his mild voice and bland manner explained his use of the words. Cautioned by the Speaker that he must not use words of menace to the House, he said, "I had no intention of offering any words of menace to this House or to anybody else. I shall not follow the example set me in that respect in these last few days by the English Press, and certainly, as I think, on the part of members of this House." Hereupon shouts of "Order" broke out, and Mr. J. R. Yorke sprang up and loudly demanded that the words be taken down. This was done, the words written down being, that Mr. Parnell "had been subject to menaces on the part of members of this House." "I did not use those words," said Mr. Parnell. "I rise, sir," shouted Sir Charles Russell, "to say that the words quoted were the words used." "I rise to order," cried Mr. Macdonald, "those were not the words used." So the quarrel went on, and at length the Speaker told Mr. Parnell he must withdraw, which he did forthwith. The Speaker then "left the conduct of the honourable member for Meath to the just judgment of the House,"* and the Chancellor of the Exchequer at once made a second proposal, "That Mr. Parnell having wilfully and persistently obstructed public business is guilty of a contempt of this House, and that Mr. Parnell for his said offence be suspended from the service of the House until Friday next."

When Mr. Parnell's back was turned, the House

* Hansard, Vol. 235, cols. 1810 to 1830.

cooled. Mr. Whitbread, in a much calmer tone, urged that the serious step of suspension should only be taken after due notice, and pleaded for twenty-four hours' consideration. Mr. Sullivan made an impassioned speech in the same sense, pointing out, moreover, that Mr. Parnell was to be really punished, not for the words used in debate, but for previous acts not then formally under discussion. Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, who had not heard the words used, and who was alone on the front Opposition bench, reminded the House how members now on the Ministerial side had thwarted the Army Purchase Bill, the Jews Bill, and the Ballot Bill; asked what crime it was to thwart the intentions of a Government, and pleaded for delay. Mr. Gathorne Hardy accepted the plea and moved that the debate be adjourned. The motion was adopted without a division, and Mr. Biggar at once fetched in Mr. Parnell, who began his speech in Committee at the point at which it had been interrupted two hours before. The first two clauses of the Bill were passed, and Mr. Biggar was speaking on an amendment to the third clause proposed by Mr. Parnell, when the quarter to six arrived and the debate stood adjourned.

On the next day (the 26th), the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice of two resolutions modifying the procedure of the House, which he would move on Friday, the 27th. These resolutions were:—

“That when a Member after being twice declared out of Order shall be pronounced by Mr. Speaker or by the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, to be disregarding the authority of the Chair, the Debate shall be at once suspended; and on a Motion being

made, in the House, that the Member be not heard during the remainder of the Debate, or during the sitting of the Committee, such Motion, after the Member complained of has been heard in explanation, shall be put without further Debate."

"That in Committee of the whole House, no member have power to move more than once, during the Debate on the same Question, either that the Chairman do report Progress, or that the Chairman do leave the Chair, nor to speak more than once to such Motion; and that no Member who has made one of these Motions have power to make the other on the same Question."

In giving notice of these resolutions the Chancellor of the Exchequer, acting on a suggestion of Lord Hartington's, moved, amid the cheers of the House, that the order for resuming the debate on the motion respecting Mr. Parnell be discharged. Next morning a meeting of Conservative members was held at the Foreign Office, at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that his resolutions had been framed in concert with the Liberal leaders. Lord Beaconsfield expressed his regret that the new rules should be needful, but his approval of the mode in which they met the difficulty, and an understanding was come to as to the course to be taken. In the evening the House of Commons adopted both resolutions by immense majorities.

Fortified by these new rules the Government pressed on with the South Africa Bill. It seemed at first as though every whisper against the Government was to be treated as an offence. In the debates in Committee on Monday night Mr. Callan said that an inference he drew from the Chairman's ruling was "an insult to the common-sense of the House," and a long discussion at once arose about the words, in the course of which Mr. Callan was stopped by

loud shouts of "Order," when he dared the Chancellor of the Exchequer "to repeat the blunder he had made last week."* Similar shouts greeted Mr. Parnell when he said that "in an emergency of this kind the leader of the House should exhibit some little presence of mind."† This intolerant temper of the Ministerial majority threatened to make all debate impossible. To express a doubt of the supreme wisdom of the Ministers was regarded by their noisy supporters as rank blasphemy. They were Sir Oracles, and no Irish dog must even bark. The members thus treated resolved on a fight and the Government determined to meet them. They said the South Africa Bill should not get through; the Government replied that it should be passed at the next sitting, and made preparations accordingly. On Tuesday everything was ready. The Whips undertook to bring up relays of members to keep a House all night. The Serjeant-at-Arms and his colleagues made arrangements for the relief of door-keepers, policemen and other officials; and a succession of Chairmen of Committee was provided. The House went into Committee at a quarter-past five, as soon as questions were over. Its fighting temper showed itself at once. It was not thinking of the Bill, but of the obstructives. As soon as Mr. Raikes had taken the chair the Committee plunged into an excited debate on their conduct, and all night long the discussion perpetually wandered away to this extraneous topic. Daylight was already streaming in, when, in

* Hansard, Vol. 236, col. 193.

† Id., col. 201.

order to show the deliberate character of the obstruction, Sir William Harcourt read part of a speech of Mr. Parnell's from a *Manchester Examiner* which Mr. Newdegate handed to him. At twenty minutes after four o'clock Mr. Raikes resigned the chair to Mr. Childers. Two hours later Mr. Forster said they were engaged in a contest of endurance, and asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take some rest and leave the work to others. At half-past six on Wednesday morning Mr. Childers resigned the chair to Mr. W. H. Smith, and the seven members who had kept up nearly all the night's divisions were reduced to five, Captain Nolan, Mr. Biggar, Mr. G. H. Kirk, Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Gray. Between seven and eight Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson took the chair. The Wednesday morning wore away, and at twelve o'clock, just before Mr. Raikes returned to his post, a division showed the obstructives to be reduced to two votes and the two tellers. Mr. Kirk had gone. At half-past twelve Mr. Parnell appeared again and asked that progress might be reported because Mr. O'Donnell was physically incapacitated to proceed with the numerous amendments which stood in his name. Loud cheers greeted this announcement, and Mr. Hardy replied that the Committee, not the Government, had come to the resolution to carry the Bill at this sitting. Rapid progress was then made, though Mr. O'Donnell persevered with some of his amendments, and at ten minutes past two on Wednesday afternoon the Bill passed through Committee. The House then proceeded with the rest of

Tuesday's orders till the usual hour of adjournment on Wednesdays. It had sat for twenty-six consecutive hours.

The fight with the obstructives on this abortive measure was, to use Young's figure, like tossing the ocean into a tempest "to waft a feather or to drown a fly." Nearly everything else was sacrificed. The Scotch members had to give up their Roads and Bridges Bill, and the Scotch Poor Law Bill went with it. Bankruptcy, Patents, Public Health, Factory Acts Consolidation, Bishoprics, Bar Education, Maritime Contracts, Corrupt Practices at Elections, and Summary Jurisdiction of Magistrates, all of which the Government had proposed to deal with during the Session, had to stand over to quieter times. Mr. Selater-Booth's Valuation Bill had a good deal of time wasted on it to meet the same fate. On the other hand, Mr. Cross got his second Winter Assizes Act, a Bill was passed in something like a panic to keep out the Colorado Potato Beetle, which has scarcely been heard of since, the Lord Chancellor passed an Act on Trade Marks, and Mr. McLagan carried a Bill which has satisfactorily settled, for a time, the Game Law question in Scotland. One small but very beneficent measure owes its origin, and indeed its enactment, to the long and patient efforts of Mr. George Smith of Coalville. Mr. George Smith having procured the passing of the Act protecting Brickyard children in 1871 turned his attention to those on board the Canal Boats, and the Canal Boats Act of 1877 was the

result. If this Act were fully carried out under the supervision of Mr. Smith himself, the crowding on these boats would be prevented and the boatmen's children would all be got to school. There was an Act to prevent the use of dynamite in fisheries; and another to amend the law with respect to the granting of Municipal Charters. Of ten Bills promised in the Queen's Speech at the beginning of the Session only four were passed and six were withdrawn; and the Speech at the end of the Session dragged in a small Scotch Bill to make up its small list of five.

Some important discussions took place which may be said to have prepared the way for future legislation. Sir Charles Dilke proposed a resolution for the extension of the hours of polling in Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, and the Government consented to refer the subject to a Select Committee. Mr. J. R. Yorke extracted from the Government a reluctant assent to a motion for inquiring by Royal Commission into the constitution and doings of the London Stock Exchange. The Government put up Mr. E. Stanhope to oppose the motion, which he did with great decision. After he had sat down it became evident that the Ministers would be defeated if the opposition were persisted in, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer consequently gave way. He spoke against the motion and declared that the inquiry could do no good, but granted it nevertheless. On Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen's Colonial Marriages Bill the Government was firmer, and was beaten. There was a harsh injustice to defend, and

the Ministers in the Commons undertook the defence with reluctance. A man may legally marry his deceased wife's sister in most of the British Colonies, and can do so by virtue of Acts passed by the Colonial Legislatures and sanctioned, after full deliberation, by the Queen. But if he comes home to England he finds the marriage null and void, his wife is unprotected, and his children are illegitimate. Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen proposed to remedy this cruel injustice. The Government opposed the Bill, but it was read a second time by a majority of 51—192 to 141. It has never got beyond this preliminary stage. Mr. Chamberlain's motion to allow municipal corporations to buy up and carry on the liquor traffic in their towns led to a very interesting discussion, though it was rejected by a majority of two to one. Mr. Trevelyan's motion for Household Suffrage in Counties led to a still more important debate, and a closer division. It was preceded by a meeting of twelve hundred delegates from various associations of agricultural labourers in Exeter Hall, which Mr. Bright addressed in one of his most striking speeches. The House of Commons' debate was remarkable for the adhesion to the principle of Household Suffrage in the Counties of all the Liberal party except Mr. Goschen and Mr. Lowe, who voted with the Government against the resolution, which Lord Hartington supported both by speech and vote. The division showed a majority of only 56 against the resolution, 220 for and 276 against. A similar motion by Mr. Meldon for assimilating the franchise

in Irish boroughs to that in the English boroughs had been defeated earlier in the Session by 239 to 165.

There were two personal discussions, the one affecting Lord Beaconsfield, and the other turning on the action of Lord Salisbury. On the 8th of June Mr. Holms asked why a new Controller of the Stationery Department had been appointed who had no technical knowledge of stationery and printing, though in 1874 a Select Committee had recommended that such knowledge should be required in the next occupant of the post. Mr. Smith's reply was regarded as unsatisfactory, and in the middle of July Mr. Holms proposed a resolution declaring that the appointment was "calculated to diminish the usefulness and influence of Select Committees of this House, and to discourage the interest and zeal of officials employed in the public departments of the State." The motion was seconded by Mr. Mellor. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a feeble apology, which left on the House the impression that an indefensible job had been perpetrated; and Mr. Holms's motion was carried by a majority of four, 156 to 152. Three days later Lord Beaconsfield made a speech in the House of Lords, giving the explanations with which he had failed to furnish his colleagues in the Commons, and especially replying to the charge that in giving the office to the son of the late Rector of Hughenden he had been rewarding political services. Mr. Pigott had left Hughenden nearly thirty years ago, and, said Lord Beaconsfield,

“with regard to our intimate friendship, and his electioneering assistance, all I know of his interference in county elections is that before he departed from the county of Buckingham he gave his vote against me.”* This last touch proved afterwards to be a mistake; but apart from it the vindication was admitted; and a few days later the vote of censure passed in the House of Commons was unanimously rescinded.

The discussion on Lord Salisbury arose out of the Metropolitan Street Improvements Bill. The House of Commons, after very careful inquiry, had passed a Bill of the Metropolitan Board authorizing the making of new streets from Piccadilly to Oxford Street, and from Tottenham Court Road to Charing Cross. Late in the Session the latter part of the scheme was suddenly withdrawn, and the Chairman of the Board explained, in reply to Mr. Fawcett, that this had been done because the House of Lords had inflicted a heavy tax on the ratepayers in favour of the freeholder, by giving him the frontages made at their expense. Mr. Fawcett consequently moved that the House disagree with the Lords' Amendment. Sir Henry James pointed out that if this clause stood, “a jury would have first of all to give the Marquis of Salisbury compensation for the land taken, and then to give him the frontage in addition to the amount paid for his comparatively valueless property.” “Six thousand persons,” continued Sir Henry James, “have been compensated for landed

* Hansard, Vol. 235, col. 1485.

property, and out of that number in no single case has this principle been applied. In this very Bill 2,500 persons had their property taken, and in 2,499 of these cases the property had been taken subject to the general rules.”* The argument was irresistible, and the House passed Mr. Fawcett’s motion, to disagree with the Lords’ Amendment, without a division. In the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury vindicated his agents, who in their zeal for his interests had persuaded the House to insert in the Bill this scheme for enabling him to sell his land and have it, but their Lordships did not insist upon retaining the clause, and the Bill passed without it.

The Finance of the year gave a good deal of satisfaction to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir Stafford Northcote described his budget as a “ready-made” one; and he concluded his Financial statement by saying, “Although it is not a very brilliant result for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to arrive at, I may say that I find some consolation—and I may even say that I rejoice—that I am in a position to say that, though you have at present only a small surplus, yet there is no deficiency, and if there is no chance of any remission of taxation, there is on the other hand no necessity for any addition.”† That there should be no deficiency, and no need for any new taxation, was a legitimate occasion for rejoicing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer at a time when some branches of the Revenue were still tend-

* Hansard, Vol. 236, cols. 454, 455.

† Id., Vol. 233, col. 1009.

ing downwards, and most branches of the Expenditure were increasing. The Estimates for 1877 were, however, characterized by a diminution in the Naval and Military outlay. Each previous year since the general election these branches of the Service had asked for more. "In the first year of the present Government," said Mr. Gladstone in his speech in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange on the 29th of November, 1879, "it was £25,903,000; in the second year it was £26,842,000; in the third year it was £27,286,000."* There was to be a yet larger upward bound in this fourth year; but it did not appear in the Budget, which even made the backward step in preparation for the forward leap. The Revenue for the year ending in April 1877 had been £78,565,036, being £153,036 more than the Estimate; the Expenditure had been £78,125,227, an excess over the Estimate of £81,382. Even with the temporary reduction in the Army and Navy Estimates the Expenditure still mounted upwards. The new Estimates were for £78,794,044, an increase of £668,817 on the previous year, and as the increased income-tax was expected to swell the Revenue to £79,020,000, there was a margin of £226,000 of estimated surplus.

A Ministerial change which was announced within the last week of the Session did much to strengthen the Government with the public. Mr. Ward Hunt, the First Lord of the Admiralty, died at Homburg on the 28th of July. He had been in ill-health for some months, and in bringing the Navy Estimates

* *Times*, December 1, 1879.

before the House had spoken in evident pain and weakness from an attack of gout. Mr. Ward Hunt was not a successful Minister, but he was a genial friend, a conscientious and painstaking official, and a member of Parliament whom everybody esteemed. Lord Beaconsfield showed his great tact in the appointment of his successor; though when the announcement was first made the public were taken by surprise. Mr. W. H. Smith won Westminster for the Conservatives partly by the high esteem in which he was held as a man of business, partly by his popular sympathies. He had been one of the Secretaries to the Treasury, but had not been particularly marked out for promotion to the rank of a Cabinet Minister. In making him First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Beaconsfield paid the borough members of his party a compliment and made a most popular appointment. Mr. W. H. Smith has gained for himself in his new office the reputation of careful and conscientious attention to details. He is liked in the House and is respected in the country. He has proved a competent administrator, and business men of all parties have been gratified at a success which proves that a business training may fit a man to undertake an important department in the business of the State.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW ENGLISH NEUTRALITY WAS KEPT.

THE new attitude assumed by the Government towards the Eastern Question at the close of 1876 and the beginning of 1877 was maintained during the greater part of the year. Well-informed politicians never believed that the Cabinet was quite the happy family it seemed; but the show of complete agreement was maintained before the world. Lord Beaconsfield kept in the background, and kept with him there the unpopular policy he was believed to represent. Sir Henry Elliot did not return to Constantinople, and Lord Derby made several attempts, through Mr. Jocelyn, who had been left in charge of the Embassy, to urge the Porte to carry out reforms of its own free will. There seemed to be some ground for hope that the Porte would yield. Midhat Pacha was banished on the 5th of February, and when Parliament met the event was regarded as indicating a change of policy at Constantinople. Lord Salisbury, in his speech on the 20th of February, said, "There can be no question that (I do not say it to his dishonour, for I do not doubt he was inspired by the most patriotic motives) the main adversary of the late Conference is the man who has fallen from

power.”* He consequently derived from Midhat’s fall an augury of eventual success for the Conference schemes. This view, like all sanguine views of Turkish improvement, proved entirely wrong. Midhat was succeeded by Edhem, but no change of policy took place. Edhem Pacha had been educated at Paris. He was ambassador at Berlin when he was recalled to act as second Plenipotentiary at the Conference; and he chiefly distinguished himself there by reminding the French Plenipotentiary that if there had been horrors in Bulgaria there had been a St. Bartholomew’s massacre in Paris. As Grand Vizier he kept up the farce of the Turkish Parliament, which appropriately preceded the tragedy of the war, and sent out more of the waste-paper currency of Turkish promises, which the British Government, in spite of Mr. Cross’s assurance, were still willing to take instead of sterling coin. But the external situation had changed. Europe was no longer willing to accept this waste-paper currency, and every Power but England had come to Mr. Cross’s opinion, that the time had arrived when solid performance must take the place of flimsy promises.

As soon as the Plenipotentiaries had gone home, the Porte had sent a circular Note to the Powers, setting forth its reasons for rejecting the proposals of the Conference. The Note was Lord Beaconsfield’s phrase of “the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire” expanded into an argument, with the addition of the new beneficent Constitution of

* Hansard, Vol. 232, col. 697.

the whole Empire, and its "guarantees of security, equality, and justice," which were set in contrast to the petty privileges Europe had demanded for a few provinces. The Note had been answered by a Circular from Prince Gortschakoff, which opened with a declaration that "the refusal opposed by the Porte to the wishes of Europe involves the Eastern crisis in a new phase." After setting forth the history of the negotiations, Prince Gortschakoff added—"The object held in view by the Great Powers was clearly defined by the proceedings of the Conference. The refusal of the Turkish Government threatens both the dignity and the tranquillity of Europe. It is necessary for us to know what the Cabinets with whom we have hitherto acted in common, propose to do with a view of meeting this refusal and insuring the execution of their wishes." * This Circular was received in London on the 3rd of February and was not answered. Lord Derby told the Russian Ambassador on the 14th that the reply would be deferred till events developed. He was still hoping that the new assurances for which he was pressing at Constantinople would be given. But the message from the new Grand Vizier was, "Let us alone." Lord Derby replied that this was far from satisfactory; he had hoped to hear that the Porte was doing of its own will what it would not do for urging by the Powers; and "if an announcement to this effect could be made in reply to the Circular of Prince Gortschakoff, it might go far to avert the danger of

* "Turkey," XV. (1877), No. 70.

hostilities on the part of Russia." * So the business drifted along all through February, Russia urging that some collective action should be taken, the British Government opposing a passive resistance to any movement. So anxious was Russia not to act alone that a general impression prevailed that the Emperor shrank from war, and was seeking to escape from the pledge he had given his people to see this Turkish business through. On the 21st of February Lord Derby wrote that the object of the Russian Government was to secure an honourable retreat from its present position. Russia had, at this moment, half a million of men under arms, and could not stand waiting indefinitely to learn whether they must be sent over the Danube or dismissed to their homes. Early in March General Ignatieff set out on a special mission to Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and London. His object was to get some common action of the Powers, which would allow the Russian armies to be demobilised. Rumours of demobilisation were constantly coming from St. Petersburg, and it was evident that the Emperor Alexander had but faint heart for the coming strife. In the middle of March General Ignatieff was in London, and the terms on which Russia would disarm were discussed. The result of the discussion was that the British Government consented once more to join the other Powers in a new appeal to the Porte, and on the last day of March a Protocol was signed in London by Count Münster, Count Beust, the Marquis

* "Turkey," XV. (1877), No. 142.

d'Harcourt, Lord Derby, Count de Menabrea, and Count Schouvaloff.

This Protocol was the turning point in the Eastern policy of the Government, as it was also in the fate of the Turkish Empire. It was the last appeal of the Powers. It was Lord Derby's final effort to preserve the peace of Europe. It recited the Turkish promises, urged their immediate performance, and said, "The Powers propose to watch carefully, by means of their representatives at Constantinople and their local agents, the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are carried into effect." It added, "If their hopes should once more be disappointed, and if the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan should not be improved in a manner to prevent the return of the complications which periodically disturb the peace of the East, they think it right to declare that such a state of affairs would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general."* The Protocol was signed with some reservations both by England and Russia. The British Government signed it on condition that it should be regarded as null and void if its object, "reciprocal disarmament on the part of Russia and Turkey, and peace between them," was not attained. At the same time the Russian Ambassador made a declaration, the form of which had been previously agreed on with the British Government. "If peace with Montenegro is concluded," said this document, "and the Porte accepts the advice of Europe, and

* See Appendix to the "Annual Register" for 1877, p. 210.

shows itself ready to replace its forces on a peace footing, and seriously to undertake the reforms mentioned in the Protocol, let it send to St. Petersburg a special Envoy to treat of disarmament, to which his Majesty the Emperor would also, on his part, consent. If massacres similar to those which have stained Bulgaria with blood take place, this would necessarily put a stop to the measures of demobilisation." It is difficult to understand what was the meaning of Lord Derby's reservation. The explanation of it is not to be found in the contents of the Protocol, which are almost entirely historical, and can no more be null and void than history itself. It concludes, indeed, with a threat of interference "if the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan should not be improved;" but that threat had been hanging over the Turks for months in the shape of the Russian armies, against which Lord Derby had said England would not attempt to shield the Porte. So far as England was concerned any hint of coercion was made null and void beforehand by many declarations which hardly needed formal repetition. Lord Derby's reservation was therefore probably the result of a compromise which had been come to in the Cabinet itself. There were those in the Cabinet who had declared that the Turks should be made to keep their promises, but there were those, on the other hand, who would have resorted to force to prevent Russia from attempting to coerce them, and between them British policy was reduced to the impotence of signing the Protocol with one hand and laying

on the table with the other hand a declaration that the signature had no meaning.

This declaration did not stand alone. On the very day on which the Protocol was signed, Mr. Layard was appointed temporary Ambassador at Constantinople. The appointment was announced to Safvet Pacha on the 3rd of April; and he immediately telegraphed that the Sultan was "very sensible of this delicate mark of attention on the part of the English Government." The choice could not fail to be agreeable to the Sultan, "as his Imperial Majesty knew by reputation the eminent qualities of Mr. Layard and his sentiments of friendship for our country." * While Mr. Layard was on his way, there was some agitation on the part of the Turkish party in England against the humiliation to be imposed on Turkey by the requirement that she should send an Envoy to St. Petersburg to sue for peace. On the 6th of April Prince Gortschakoff told Lord Augustus Loftus that if Turkey sent an evasive reply to the Protocol, Russia would go to war at once. Lord Augustus Loftus urged that in that event the last paragraph of the Protocol pledged Russia to further united action with the other Powers. "Yes," said Prince Gortschakoff, "only England has expressly declared that if the object of the Protocol is not attained it is to be 'null and void'; and Russia is thus left free to act alone." † Three days later the Protocol was rejected. "Turkey, as an independent State," said the Turkish reply, "cannot submit to be placed

* "Turkey," XV. (1877), No. 479.

† Id., No. 518.

under any surveillance, whether collective or not.”* This despatch reached Lord Derby on the 12th of April, and he at once expressed to Musurus Pacha his regret at the tone the Porte had adopted. On the very day after this conversation the Porte launched another defiance at united Europe, in the shape of an announcement to Montenegro that hostilities would be immediately recommenced. In another week Mr. Layard had reached Constantinople and at once seen the Grand Vizier, who told him that if Turkey had five millions of money she would prolong negotiations; and when Mr. Layard said that by her defiant answer to the Protocol Turkey had put herself in the wrong before the world, the Grand Vizier admitted that it had been done in order to bring matters to a crisis.† The crisis was on him even while he spoke. On the day before Mr. Layard’s arrival at Constantinople, Prince Gortschakoff sent a Circular to all the Powers recalling the pledges which had been given by the Emperor of immediate action if the Porte refused the “last expression of the collective will of Europe,” and announcing that in consequence of that refusal he had given his armies the order to cross the frontiers of Turkey. The declaration of war was made on the 24th of April and the frontiers were crossed both in Europe and Asia on the same day.

Thus the very event had happened which both parties in England were most anxious to avoid. Lord Derby had failed to keep the peace because the Turks had been encouraged, to the last, to expect

* “Turkey.” XV. (1877). No. 519.

† Id., XXV. (1877), No. 205.

the help of England against Russia, and did not believe Lord Derby's declarations that such help could not be given. The Liberal party had failed to get England a share in the work of protecting the nascent liberties of the Christian populations, because the Prime Minister and his House of Commons' supporters sympathized with their oppressors. The whole object of the Liberal policy at this time was to provide that the enforcement of the decisions of the Conference should not be left to Russia. Their argument was stated by the Duke of Argyll in his forcible speech in the House of Lords on the 20th of February. Speaking of the reduced proposals of the Conference he said, "I understood the noble Marquis (the Marquis of Salisbury) when he spoke of the *minima*, that these *minima* were still sufficient for the protection of the Christian people of Turkey—barely sufficient, but that they were sufficient, and that being sufficient he accepted them. But, my Lords, if they are sufficient, and if nothing short of them is sufficient, and if you cannot trust the promise of the Turk—and no one has said that more clearly than the noble Marquis—then, I ask, why were they not worth fighting for? If your demand was a real and not a sham demand for the good government of Turkey, then all the duty, all the obligation to which you have confessed regarding it, lies upon you as a duty and obligation still." The same argument was stated in another form in the eloquent peroration of the same speech. "At one time in the course of this year, the noble Earl (Lord Beaconsfield) gave public

intimation, otherwise I should not feel myself at liberty to refer to it, that it was his desire, at no distant day, to retire from the fatigues and cares of his great office . . . My Lords, the noble Earl will not retire, if ever he does retire, with any better wish . . . than the wish that I shall give him, and it is this—that when he looks back to this Government of which he is the distinguished head, he may be able to say that he has wielded the great influence and power of England for the purpose and with the effect of procuring some measure of tolerable liberty for the Christian subjects of Turkey, and that in procuring that measure of tolerable liberty he has secured it on such conditions as will guarantee them for the future, not only against the odious barbarism of the Turks, but also against the crushing autocracy of the Russian Czars.”* In a debate on the Protocol in the House of Commons, on the 13th of April, Lord Hartington protested against “the false assumption which has more or less pervaded all these negotiations; it is that in this great issue which has been pending more than twelve months between the Christian subjects of Turkey and the Government of Turkey, and in the still greater issue which has been pending between Europe and Turkey, Russia should be allowed and acknowledged by common consent to place herself in the position of counsel for the plaintiff. It is the assumption that the Russian demands, which may be refused, or reduced, or altered, are demands which, under all circumstances, are to be considered as the

* Hansard, Vol. 232, cols. 658, 659.

measure and the limit—the very utmost that the Christians or that Europe have a right to claim from the Government of Turkey. That is a position which Russia has always desired to assume. It is a position not very far removed from the protectorate that Russia has always claimed, the protectorate against the extension of which the Crimean war was waged, the protectorate which, ever since the Crimean war, Russia has endeavoured to recover, the protectorate which in a blind and short-sighted opposition to Russian policy we have gone a long way to restore to Russia.”*

The tone of the Ministerial party in this debate was such as to encourage the Turks in the hope of help from England. Sir William Fraser said that the Turk had shown two qualities which Britons love with a passionate love, courage and dignity. Dr. Kenealy threw his protecting shield over Her Majesty's Government, and said that if war came he should regard the members of the late Government as its authors. Mr. Roebuck's new-fledged Tory zeal was so much delighted with this original suggestion that he sprang up and repeated it. The House laughed, and Mr. Roebuck reiterated his paradox. Mr. Hanbury said that the cry of humanity was a sham. Later in the debate, Mr. Goschen spoke amid continuous interruption from the Tory benches below the gangway, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer wound up the discussion by a conciliatory speech, justifying the Protocol and declaring that

* Hansard, Vol. 233, cols. 1081-2.

whether its language be strong or weak, it recorded "various points of recognized importance in this discussion, which is proved by the fact that Russia was willing to accept it as a sufficient reason for abstaining for the present from the use of force."* Neither Sir Stafford Northcote in this discussion, nor Lord Derby in the debate which followed on the 16th of April in the House of Lords, explained how it was that a Government which was above all things desirous of peace, failed to press on the Turks the acceptance of the Protocol, when that acceptance would certainly have postponed the war, and might have prevented it. Lord Derby indeed suggested, but only as a hypothesis, that Russia might not have had a real intention of making peace. On that hypothesis he thought the course taken by the Government was the best that could be taken. But Lord Derby carefully guarded himself from being understood to state the insincerity of Russia as a fact. He was finding excuses for a course the real reasons for which he could not explain. The violent articles which were then appearing in the Ministerial papers, the ominous silence of Lord Beaconsfield, the cheers with which the Conservative benches in the House of Commons rang when anything was said in favour of the noble Turk, and the impatience with which every plea for the freeing of the Christian populations was listened to, were the real explanations of the course the Ministers were taking. They had been running before the autumn breeze, but its force had somewhat abated;

* Hansard, Vol. 233, col. 1177.

and the current of Conservative sympathy with the Turkish governing class, together with the popular suspicion of the autocrat of Russia which many Liberals shared, was already checking their movement. Mr. Cross said no more about Turkish promises being waste-paper currency which must now be paid in sterling coin. Sir Stafford Northcote was silent about the uselessness of putting a sticking plaster on such a sore. Better the waste paper than that Russia should enforce its redemption; better the unhealed sore than that Russia should probe and cure the wound.

This doctrine was not stated by any Minister, but it was acted on. Lord Derby sent a reply to the Russian Circular, in which he scolded Russia for declaring war, pleaded once more the Turkish promises of reform, accused the Emperor of separating himself from the European concert, and declared the British disapproval of the war. At Constantinople itself Mr. Layard was diligently endeavouring to teach the Porte how to change or modify that public opinion in England which would not, as he told the Porte, "support or approve any Government that was prepared to help Turkey." His first step was to get the Porte to appeal for mediation under the Eighth Article of the Treaty of Paris. The appeal, however, came too late. France replied that the first step for the Porte to take was to accept the Protocol; England answered that the appeal could not be of any avail. Lord Derby made no further effort to stop the war, but wrote to Count Schouvaloff that letter of the

6th of May which Lord Beaconsfield afterwards described as the charter of the policy of the Government. It pledged the Government to neutrality in the war "so long as Turkish interests alone are involved." Other interests, however, "which they are equally bound and determined to defend," might be imperilled if the war was prolonged, and Lord Derby, on the part of the Government, clearly stated what these were. Foremost among them was the Suez Canal. "An attempt to blockade or otherwise to interfere with the Canal or its approaches would be regarded by them as a menace to India, and as a grave injury to the commerce of the world. On both these grounds any such step—which they hope and fully believe there is no intention on the part of either belligerent to take—would be inconsistent with the maintenance by them of passive neutrality." The next point was Egypt, and Russia was told that "an attack on that country or its occupation, even temporarily for purposes of war could scarcely be regarded with unconcern by the neutral Powers, certainly not by England." Of Constantinople it was said, "Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to witness with indifference the passing into other hands than those of its present possessors, of a Capital possessing so peculiar and commanding a position." The existing arrangements which regulate the navigation of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were described as "wise and salutary"; and it was intimated that there would be "serious objections to their alteration in any material sense." The possibility of interests

needing protection on the Persian Gulf was pointed out; and after reminding the Emperor of the assurances he had given at Livadia, the despatch concluded, "Her Majesty's Government cannot better show their confidence in these declarations of his Imperial Majesty than by requesting your Excellency to be so good as to convey to the Emperor and the Russian Government the frank explanation of British policy which I have had the honour of thus offering to you." *

Prince Gortschakoff lost no time in sending an answer to this despatch, appreciating the frankness of Lord Derby's explanation of British policy, and repeating all the pledges it invited. The Suez Canal should neither be blockaded, nor interrupted, nor in any way menaced. Egypt, as part of the Turkish Empire, might be regarded as a country with which Russia was at war; but it should not be brought within the radius of Russian military operations. The acquisition of Constantinople was "excluded from the views of his Majesty the Emperor," and "if the possession of that city were to be put in question, it could not be allowed to belong to any of the European Powers." The question of the Straits "should be settled by a common agreement upon equitable and efficiently guaranteed bases." As to the Persian Gulf and the route to India, "the Imperial Cabinet declares," said Prince Gortschakoff, "that it will not extend the war beyond what is required for the loudly and clearly declared object for

* "*Russia*," II. (1877), No. 1.

which his Majesty, the Emperor, was obliged to take up arms." The despatch concluded with an appeal to England for fair consideration of the particular interests Russia had at stake, with a repetition of the assurances that the sole object of the war was the necessity of putting an end to the chronic state of disturbance produced by the deplorable condition of the Christians under Turkish rule; and a statement that "this interest, which is a vital one for Russia, is not opposed to any of the interests of Europe, which suffers too, on her side, from the precarious state of the East."*

While these declarations and assurances were being exchanged between the two Cabinets a great debate had been going on in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone had given notice of five resolutions, which raised the whole Eastern Question and urged the Government to use its influence to promote local liberty and practical self-government in the disturbed provinces of Turkey. The notice of these resolutions created much excitement in the country. At the Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society, held on the 1st of May, a motion by the Rev. H. W. Crosskey, of Birmingham, expressive of sympathy with Mr. Gladstone "in his noble efforts on behalf of the oppressed subjects of the Porte," and deprecating any support by England of Turkish tyranny, was carried by acclamation and presented to Mr. Gladstone by a special deputation from the meeting. All over the kingdom Liberal bodies passed similar

* "Russia," II. (1877), No. 2.

resolutions, and some three hundred meetings were held to protest against any interference on behalf of Turkey. There was no fear of any such interference so long as Lord Derby was in the Cabinet; but the public knew nothing of what the Government was doing, and could only judge of its intentions by the tone of the Ministerial papers and of the Conservative majority in Parliament. The air was full of rumours, the nature of which Mr. Carlyle has put on record in the following characteristic letter, which appeared in the *Times* on the 5th of May:—

“SIR,—A rumour everywhere prevails that our miraculous Premier, in spite of his Queen’s Proclamation of Neutrality, intends, under cover of ‘care for British interests,’ to send the English fleet to the Baltic, or do some other feat which shall compel Russia to declare war against England. Latterly the rumour has shifted from the Baltic and become still more sinister, on the eastern side of the scene, where a feat is contemplated that will force not Russia only, but all Europe, to declare war against us. This latter I have come to know as an indisputable fact; in our present affairs and outlooks surely a grave one. As to ‘British interests,’ there is none visible or conceivable to me, except taking strict charge of our route to India by Suez and Egypt; and for the rest, resolutely steering altogether clear of any copartnery with the Turk in regard to this or any other British interest whatever. It should be felt by England as a real ignominy to be connected with such a Turk at all. Nay, if we still had, as, in fact, all ought to have, a wish to save him from perdition and annihilation in God’s world, the one future for him that has any hope in it is even now that of being conquered by the Russians and gradually schooled and drilled into peaceable attempt at learning to be himself governed. The newspaper outcry against Russia is no more respectable to me than the howling of Bedlam, proceeding, as it does, from the deepest ignorance, egoism, and paltry national jealousy. These things I write not on hearsay, but on accurate knowledge, and to all friends of their country will recommend immediate attention to them while there is yet time, lest in a few weeks the maddest and most criminal thing that a British Government could do should be done, and all Europe kindle into flames of war.—I am, &c., T. CARLYLE.”

The announcement of Mr. Gladstone’s Resolutions

and the great movement they had created in the country, checkmated the schemes of those who would have led us into war. In a letter to a meeting of his constituents on the 2nd of May, Mr. Gladstone had expressed his conviction that the feeling exhibited in the autumn agitation had not died away, and had pointed out that "the crimes which moved our judgments quite as much as our feelings in September, remain not only unpunished, but rewarded. Their amount has been constantly swollen by a series of fresh outrages down to the present time. The demands of the British Government for punishment and redress have been contemptuously cast aside. From a third to a half of the Christian population of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been driven from their homes in great want and suffering. The Turk, assured beforehand of his impunity so far as he was concerned, has rejected, as must have been expected, our remonstrances and schemes. And the necessary business of redressing a great and execrable iniquity, which could only be safely carried on under a great combination of authorities, has been allowed to devolve upon a single Power, and that Power, one subject from neighbourhood, in a peculiar degree to the temptations of self-interest. Such," added Mr. Gladstone, "is the stream of events. If being such, the British people are content to 'drift' on it, be it so, for I know no other tribunal of appeal; but I for one will not accept in silence at such a crisis the very smallest share in so great a responsibility."

These letters were published and all these meetings

held in the first week of May. On the 1st of May the scolding despatch to St. Petersburg had been sent; but on the 6th of May, the Sunday of the week in which the debate on Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions was to begin on the Monday, the letter to Count Schouvaloff defining the easy conditions of British neutrality had been written. Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone had found that a portion of the Liberal party regarded his Resolutions as too distinctly pledging England to a joint interference with Russia in Turkish affairs, whereas they would be satisfied with absolute non-intervention. Mr. Gladstone consequently withdrew the three which had this effect and kept only the first two, which declared, firstly, "that the House finds just cause of dissatisfaction and complaint in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte with regard to the despatch written by the Earl of Derby on September 21, 1876, and relating to the massacres in Bulgaria"; and secondly "that this House is of opinion that the Porte, by its conduct towards its subject populations and by its refusal to give guarantees for their better government, has forfeited all claim to receive either the material or the moral support of the British Crown." These Resolutions placed the Government in a difficulty. They finally met it by putting up Sir H. Drummond Wolfe to move an amendment declaring that the House "declines to entertain any Resolutions which may embarrass her Majesty's Government in the maintenance of peace and in the protection of British interests, without indicating any alternative

line of policy.” Mr. Gladstone introduced the first Resolution in one of the most eloquent and persuasive speeches he had ever delivered in the House of Commons. The debate lasted five nights and resulted in rendering clear and obvious the position of the Government. When Mr. Gladstone spoke at the beginning of the debate nothing was known of the letter which, only the day before, had been written to Count Schouvaloff. But at the close of the first night of the discussion Mr. Cross made a speech which exhibited the Government in a very different light from that in which Ministerial writers and speakers had been for a month past representing it to the country. Speaking of the autumn agitation Mr. Cross said, “I, for one, should have been ashamed of my countrymen if public expression had not been given from one end of the land to the other of their utter detestation of the horrors which had been committed in Turkey.”* Mr. Cross then detailed the interests which England would not allow the war to imperil, in terms very similar to those which Lord Derby had written to Count Schouvaloff on the day before. He quoted the assurances given by the Emperor of Russia to Lord Augustus Loftus at Livadia, and said that if the Emperor kept his word no British interests would be concerned. He concluded by declaring that the policy of the Government was one of the strictest neutrality between the contending nations.

The reassuring portions of Mr. Cross’s speech were

* Hansard, Vol. 234, col. 457.

received on his own side of the House with chilling coldness. Not a cheer came from the benches behind him when he said that he abhorred the doings of the Turkish Government from the bottom of his heart. Much enthusiasm was shown while he was denouncing the conduct of Russia and raising the standard of "No Coercion," but it died away into the silence of blank dismay when he turned to the emphatic declaration that the whole responsibility for the present state of things rested on the Sultan, and that the policy of the Government was one of complete neutrality so long as British interests were not involved. The Government, however, firmly maintained its neutral attitude, and in his speech on the last night of the debate the Chancellor of the Exchequer repeated, with emphasis, the assurances Mr. Cross had given a week before. In his reply at the close of the fifth night of the discussion, Mr. Gladstone reviewed the declarations that had been made by these Ministers, and pointed out their complete disagreement with the spirit of the despatch of the 1st of May. The letter of the 6th of May, with which they were in harmony, had not been named in the debate and was only known to the members of the Cabinet at home and to the Russian Government. Mr. Gladstone, however, accurately described the position when he concluded his speech by saying, "This debate, I think, has done something to assist the prevalence of the healthier influences within the Cabinet. I must offer the Home Secretary a compliment which I know he will

not, and he cannot, accept; we look upon ourselves as his allies. But we are engaged in a continuous effort; we roll the stone of Sisyphus against the slope, and the moment the hand shall be withdrawn down it will begin to run. However, the time is short; the sands of the hour-glass are running out. The longer you delay, the less in all likelihood you will be able to save from the wreck of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. If Russia should fail, her failure would be a disaster to mankind, and the condition of the suffering races for whom we are supposed to have laboured will be worse than it was before. If she succeeds, and if her conduct be honourable, even if it be but tolerably prudent, the performance of the work she has in hand will, notwithstanding all your jealousies and all your reproaches, secure for her an undying fame. When that work shall be accomplished, though it be not in the way and by the means I would have chosen, as an Englishman I shall hide my head, but as a man I shall rejoice. Nevertheless, to my latest day I will exclaim, 'Would God that in this crisis the voice of the nation had been suffered to prevail. Would God that in this great, this holy deed, England had not been refused her share.' ”*

The division which followed this great debate was one of the largest which the existing Parliament had seen. The actual vote was 223 for the Resolution and 354 against it, a majority for the Government of 131. Ten Liberals had paired with ten Con-

* Hansard, Vol. 234, col. 972.

servatives; six Liberals voted with the Government, and one Conservative, Mr. Newdegate, spoke and voted with Mr. Gladstone. Eighteen Liberals and only seven Conservatives were absent without pairing. The Irish Home Rulers leaned to the side of the Government. Only eleven voted with Mr. Gladstone while seventeen went into the opposite lobby and twenty-one stayed away. Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the late Ministry all voted for his Resolution, but Scotland alone of the Three Kingdoms gave a majority in its favour. There were thirty-three Scotch members for the Resolution and only twenty against it. Of the Irish members forty-nine were for the Government and only twenty for Mr. Gladstone; and of English members a hundred and seventy supported his Resolution and two hundred and eighty-five voted against it. "And now, what has the House of Commons voted?" asked Mr. Gladstone, speaking to a vast meeting in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, on the last day of May. "What is the motion it has passed? Examine the elements of it. There are two things only to be done: the House refused to say that moral support should be withdrawn from Turkey; it refused to say that it was dissatisfied with the contemptuous treatment of Lord Derby's despatch condemning the Bulgarian massacres. Why did it refuse? It refused for the fear that we should be doing—what? Prosecuting the great purpose of philanthropy and honour in making the British name loved and revered for labours and exploits in the cause of humanity and freedom? No such thing,

but lest we should embarrass the Government in the maintenance of British interests, in the preservation of peace, which at the very moment the resolution was passed could no longer be preserved—because, in consequence of our perverse and bungling policy, it had been already broken.”

This was the only important debate which took place on the Eastern Question after the beginning of the war. The Danube was crossed at the end of June, and the invading armies were received with every possible expression of enthusiasm by the Bulgarian population. It seemed for the first two months as though the Turks would make no real defence. By the middle of July General Gourko had crossed the Balkans, and the Russians were advancing towards Adrianople when a check was given them. Osman Pacha had drawn into Plevna, where, on the 21st of July, he succeeded in repulsing a Russian attack; which was renewed with even worse success on the 30th. While all the world was looking on at a struggle in which it was becoming evident that the Russians had underestimated the defensive power of the Turks, diplomacy was quietly at work behind the scenes, and Ministers were repeating to the public their assurances of neutrality. Mr. Layard had told the Turks, when the war broke out, not only that public opinion in England would prevent any Government from helping them, but also that it was “of vital importance to Turkey that she should seek to change or modify that opinion.”* He did not at

* “Turkey,” XXV. (1877), No. 211.

first give them much help in this vital work. On the 8th of June Count Schouvaloff and Lord Derby had a confidential conversation, in which the Russian Ambassador explained that the Emperor was ready to conclude a peace on certain conditions. These were, the autonomy of Bulgaria north of the Balkans, and the guarantee of good government in the other Provinces under securities to be agreed on by the Powers. In this same conversation Count Schouvaloff said that Russia would require the cession of Batoum and the retrocession of the piece of Bessarabia taken from her by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. At the same time Count Schouvaloff repeated the assurances that Russia would not attempt to hold Constantinople, though she might be compelled to occupy it for a time. The bases of peace now named were only to be communicated to Turkey if England agreed with them; and were only to hold good if the war was concluded before the Russian armies had been compelled to cross to the south of the Balkans.

Mr. Layard was asked his opinion on these terms and gave it with perfect clearness. If Russia were over the Danube and at the Balkan passes, even were she in possession of Armenia, the suggested terms might be offered; but till then it would be dangerous even to mention them to the Sultan. Meanwhile Count Schouvaloff had gone back to Lord Derby and said that the separation of Bulgaria into two provinces, one autonomous, and the other still subject to the Turkish officials, would not be enough; it must all be autonomous. This also Lord Derby reported

to Mr. Layard, who sent back a violent reply,* urging the Government not to be the medium even of suggesting such terms. "Let some other Power," said Mr. Layard, "accept this task." As soon as the Russians were over the Danube, Lord Derby instructed Mr. Layard to speak to the Sultan on the question of peace and to assure him of England's help in getting the most favourable terms the circumstances would allow. But before Mr. Layard replied the two attacks on Plevna had been repulsed, and he therefore answered that the Sultan would not listen to any conditions; that he and his Ministers were much encouraged by recent successes and felt confident that the enemy would be repulsed and driven out of Roumelia and Bulgaria as he had been out of Asia.† Before this reply came, the Emperor of Russia, in conversation with Colonel Wellesley on the 30th July, had authorized him to repeat once more to the British Government that he was ready to treat for peace, that he had no idea of annexation except the bit of Bessarabia and a certain portion of Armenia, that he would not occupy Constantinople for military honour but only if it was rendered needful by the march of events, that a temporary occupation of Bulgaria would be needful, and that a European Conference would settle the conditions of peace. The Government, in reply to this communication, expressed its satisfaction at the Emperor's disclaimer of any extensive ideas of annexation, and

* Despatch of June 19, "Turkey," XV. (1878), No. 10.

† Despatch of August 2, "Turkey," XV. (1878), No. 12.

at his readiness to negotiate for peace, as well as its gratitude for the assurance given of the Emperor's intention with respect to the interests of England.

All these communications were kept secret from the British public for many months. It was not till Midsummer Day that the letter of Lord Derby on the 6th of May, and Prince Gortschakoff's reply to it, became known; and all the discussions of the autumn and winter of 1877 were carried on in entire ignorance of these later assurances and replies. The effect of them was, however, allowed to appear in some Ministerial declarations. The first conversation between Lord Derby and Count Schouvaloff took place on the 8th of June, and on the 11th Lord Salisbury made two reassuring speeches. He said in the House of Lords, in reply to an alarmist speech by Lord de Mauley as to Russia's advance in Central Asia, that "in discussions of this kind a great deal of apprehension arises from the popular use of maps on too small a scale. As with such maps you are able to put a thumb on India and a finger on Russia, some persons at once think that the political situation is alarming, and that India must be looked to. If the noble lord would only use a larger map—say one on the scale of the Ordnance map of England—he would find that the distance between Russia and British India is not to be measured by the finger and thumb, but by a rule. There are between them deserts and mountainous chains measured by thousands of miles, and these are serious obstacles to any advance of Russia, how-

ever well planned such an advance might be.”* At a dinner of the Merchant Taylors’ Copmany on the evening of the same day, Lord Salisbury made a scornful reply to the articles which were every day appearing in the Ministerial papers as to the peril to British interests. “I have a colonial friend who is very much exercised in his mind, and in a very anxious state in connection with the Cape of Good Hope. He pointed out to me that Russia was in Armenia, that Armenia is the key to Syria, that Syria is the key to Egypt, and that any one advancing into Egypt has the key to Africa. By this list of keys long drawn out, he shows that the present victories of Russia seriously menace South Africa. I have done my best to console him, but I feel that his anxious feelings are only characteristic of the apprehensions which I hear around me.” Speaking of the projects of interference in the war, Lord Salisbury continued—“Caution, and extreme caution, is necessary before a Government risks the wealth, the prosperity, and the freedom which we have around us, and before it breaks the peace of the world, perhaps bringing all the horrors of war into Europe, and this, not in pursuit of real honour, but of a theory and a dream. It has generally been considered madness to go to war for an idea, but if anything is yet more unsatisfactory, it is to go to war against a nightmare.”†

The other Ministers spoke with less emphasis than this but in the same sense. The despatch of the fleet

* Hansard, Vol. 234, col. 1565.

† *Times*, June 12, 1877.

to Besika Bay was explained away both by Lord Derby and Sir Stafford Northcote. The former said, in a debate on the 19th July, "I cannot conceive a situation in which you can interfere with more influence and effect than at the close of a war." He also said that the Russian Ambassador had thanked him "for having warned his Government where those 'torpedoes' called English interests were."* On the 9th of August, Lord Beaconsfield assured the House of Lords that the Government had received a friendly reply from Russia to its definition of British interests, and added, "The Government have no reason to doubt that Russia will, in an honourable manner, observe the conditions which were the subject of that correspondence."† On the next day Sir Stafford Northcote said, in reply to some observations by Mr. Monk, that "hasty and casual expressions had been caught up and made the foundation for action and expectations which, after all, have been misunderstood and have led to subsequent misapprehensions and disappointment, and the anxiety of Her Majesty's Government in this matter is to pursue a plain, honest, and frank line of policy, and, at the same time, a prudent and reserved one."‡ He said this in response to an expression of Mr. Forster's. Mr. Forster had explained that he and his friends had forborne to insist upon explanations as to the Eastern policy of the Government, because the Government had declared that such discussion would be disadvan-

* Hansard, Vol. 235, col. 1509. † Id., Vol. 236, col. 668.

‡ Id., col. 768.

tageous to the public interest. "I may, perhaps, be allowed to say, speaking for myself, and I believe for others also," added Mr. Forster, "that we should not have assented to that course, had we had reason to fear that the Government were likely, between now and the opening of Parliament, to drag this country into war or to involve us in any breach of neutrality. We have most carefully considered everything that has been both written and said by the Government in this matter, and looking at the last despatches and the declarations of the Government, we feel convinced that they mean to abide by a policy of strict neutrality, and that being the case, we do not feel that it is necessary to do more than remind them of the responsibility under which they lie." * Three days later, Mr. Fawcett asked for some further assurances as to the course to be taken in the six months when Parliament was not sitting, and Sir Stafford Northcote replied, "The policy of the Government is a policy of neutrality—of strict neutrality—as regards the questions which are at issue between the contending Powers, but subject, of course, to the conditions that this country will feel herself obliged to watch over her own interests." As that phrase needed explanation, Sir Stafford Northcote referred to Lord Derby's despatch of the 6th of May, in which the Foreign Secretary had, "in a manner which is beyond ordinary diplomatic precedent," explained those interests. "We have in no degree departed," he added, "nor do we intend

* Hansard, Vol. 236, col. 765.

to depart, from the lines so marked out.”* With these emphatic assurances of neutrality the Liberals of both Houses of Parliament went home in peace.

There was need enough for pledges. All the summer the country had been distrustful, and the journals which most ostentatiously supported the Government and professed to represent its views were daily denouncing Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury. There were rumours of Lord Salisbury's retirement. About Midsummer, a statement came from Paris and got general credence in London, that a Vote of Credit for five millions would be asked for. It was the shadow which an event then seven months off had cast before it; and it thus really indicated what was passing in the minds of the war faction in the Cabinet. Mr. Gladstone published an important letter pointing out the needlessness and danger of the Vote; and it was not then proposed. The check which the Russian arms had suffered, both in Asia and in Europe, raised to fever heat the zeal of the Turkish advocates in this country. Through the last part of the Parliamentary Session and the early months of the recess the Ministers all talked neutrality and peace, but their supporters in the Press breathed nothing but interference and war. The public mind was thus kept in a state of constant excitement. Every change in the fortunes of the fight was turned to account. If the Turks won a victory, they were represented as deserving our help; if they incurred a defeat, public compassion was

* Hansard, Vol. 236, col. 806.

appealed to and England was urged to fly to the rescue of a great civilization and a noble race. Osman Pacha's gallant defence at Plevna was held to have condoned the offences of the Turkish Government against humanity, and echoes of the old laughter at “imaginary” horrors in Bulgaria were heard again. The zeal of Islam had eaten the *Daily Telegraph* up. Its patronage of Christianity on Christmas Days and Good Fridays was almost as completely forgotten as its slavish adulation of Mr. Gladstone in his days of power, and it preached a Jihad or Holy War for the “rejuvenation of Islam,” at the same time that it trampled its former political idol under scornful feet. Every man was a traitor who did not admire Lord Beaconsfield or expect the salvation of the East to come forth from the harems on the Bosphorus.

As the autumn approached the position of the Russians became worse. On the 22nd of September Chefket Pacha got into Plevna with a convoy and ten thousand troops, and it soon became the fashion to talk of the necessity for Russia to prepare for another campaign in the spring. On the 8th of September, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who knew of those peace offers of the Emperor which were still concealed from the British public, had told the members of the Exeter Chamber of Commerce that this had been a war of surprises; and though people were saying that it could not terminate in one campaign, he could not help thinking there might be a surprise which might disappoint the prophecies even of those

experienced persons. The prospect of a sudden settlement was, said Sir Stafford Northcote, “the only bit of blue sky I venture to see at the present moment in the Eastern Question.” The bit of blue soon clouded over. In the middle of October the two old *Quarterlies* came out with articles which took the complete defeat of Russia for granted, but the sheets were not dry before the news came of the utter rout of Mukhtar Pacha on the 14th and 15th of October by the Grand Duke Michael and General Lazareff in Asia. This defeat, in which twenty-six battalions with seven pachas and thirty-six guns were taken by the Russians, almost annihilated the Turkish defence in Asia. Plevna, however, still held out; and daily appeals were addressed to the Government to give its defenders some kind of help. Lord Hartington, speaking at Glasgow on the 7th of November, congratulated the Government on its neutrality and expressed the hope that the neutrality did not merely rest on the successes the Turks had gained some months ago, but would be maintained now that the tide seemed to have turned and that the outcry for a different policy was being raised again. At the November banquet in the Guildhall, Lord Beaconsfield in reply restated the doctrine of conditional neutrality and said:—“The independence of Turkey was a subject of ridicule a year ago. The independence of Turkey, whatever may be the fortunes of war—and war changes like the moon—is not doubted now.” He praised the Russian soldiers and intimated that both sides had done enough for honour, but let

his sympathy with the Turks appear through the whole speech. It was noted, however, that though the independence of Turkey was more dwelt on than ever, the integrity of the Turkish Empire was entirely dropped.

This speech raised more apprehension than it quieted. It at least encouraged the advocates of war, and it fell to Lord Derby to apply a chilling frost to their budding hopes. On the 28th of November Lord Derby received at the Foreign Office a group of Turkish sympathizers who urged that the Government should at once take up the Turkish cause. Lord Derby told them that in the American war and in the Franco-German war there were many who thought England was degraded because she did not take part on one side or the other. Seven years ago a Minister had entered on a war of prestige, as he said, with a light heart; "but I do not think," said Lord Derby, "that he came out of it with a light heart." "For my own part," he added, "believing that unless war is a necessity it is a crime, I think we ought to be most careful to do and say nothing which would tend unnecessarily to bring it on." He then replied in detail to the proposals for interference which had been addressed to him, and concluded by referring the deputation "to the language we held at the beginning of the war, and from which we do not intend to depart either on the one side or the other." This speech quieted the apprehensions which that of Lord Beaconsfield had aroused. An impression had prevailed on the Continent that British intervention in the war

was imminent, but Lord Derby's assurances set it at rest. They were followed by Sir Stafford Northcote in a speech at Bournemouth a week later. On the 11th of December came the news of the fall of Plevna and the taking of 30,000 prisoners. On that same evening Mr. Gathorne Hardy was speaking to a new Scottish Conservative Club at Edinburgh, and thought it timely to be a little more warlike than his colleagues. "The Government," he said, "have a constant watch on the Eastern Question. The Prime Minister has said that we have a conditional neutrality, and with the utmost frankness we have laid before Russia some of the points upon which we feel difficulties may arise in the course of events. Hitherto these have remained untouched." The Government, however, were watching for an opportunity "to intervene and bring this horrible war to a conclusion." On the next night, Mr. Hardy spoke to a public meeting of the Conservative Working Men's Association, and loudly claimed for England a right, which he admitted that Russia had conceded, to a voice in the settlement. The feeling expressed in these two speeches was anything but neutral, and the hopes of those who would go to war for the Turks revived again.

While Mr. Hardy was speaking, an appeal to the Powers for mediation, "in the name of humanity," was being sent out by the Porte. The appeal was refused, and on the 19th of December Lord Derby wrote to Mr. Layard telling him of an interview with Musurus Pacha, in which that Minister had

“dwelt on the still unexhausted resources of Turkey.” The Turks still hoped for English interference. “As he referred more than once to the possibility of English intervention, I thought it right,” said Lord Derby in this important despatch, “to repeat the warning which I had frequently before given, namely, that no such intervention was to be expected.”* Had this declaration been known to the British public it would have prevented much excitement at home. On the very day on which it was made it was announced that Parliament would reassemble on the 17th of January, three weeks earlier than the usual date. The announcement produced a panic. Consols fell three-eighths. Railway shares experienced a much farther depreciation. The distrust of Lord Beaconsfield showed itself even among members of his own party, who jumped to the conclusion that on the 17th of January the country would find itself committed to some irrevocable step inconsistent with the maintenance of peace. A great agitation sprang up. Chambers of commerce, town councils, great public meetings, and various political and non-political organizations, met to protest against any infringement of our neutrality. There was, however, a movement on the other side. A meeting of Turkish sympathizers was called in Trafalgar Square on the last Saturday in the year, which led to a fight. A Turkish flag was hoisted, but the crowd tore it to pieces. Nevertheless, a large deputation marched to the Turkish Embassy to express hatred of the Russians and admiration for

* “Turkey,” II. (1878), No. 4.

the Turks, and were addressed in a speech of grateful recognition by Musurus Pacha.

The year closed upon this agitation. All kinds of rumours filled the air. The Turkish official organ at Constantinople said that there were statements abroad that the British Fleet was going to the Dardanelles, and told the British Government that, if it came, it must be as an ally. Here again, as in the case of the Vote of Credit, coming resolutions of the Cabinet at home were forestalled by rumours from abroad. Lord Derby, behind the scenes, was still, like another Falkland, "ingeminating peace." On Christmas Eve Mr. Layard was told to ask the Porte whether England should sound the Russian Emperor, and Mr. Layard replied on Christmas Day that a request to that effect had already been sent through Musurus Pacha. Lord Augustus Loftus was then directed to make the inquiry if the Emperor would entertain overtures for peace, and he answered by a message from Prince Gortschakoff, that "Russia desired nothing better," but that the Porte must first ask for an armistice from the military commanders. The last day of the year found the Porte still hesitating what to do. The Pachas knew more than the public at home knew. They waited to see whether Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Hardy or Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon would get the upper hand in the struggle which had been going on for weeks in the British Cabinet. This was decided for a time by the strong expressions of public opinion which were being reported every day. The Liberal party

was still rolling the stone of Sisyphus against the slope, as Mr. Gladstone had said in May, was still giving strength to the peace party in the Cabinet and enabling them to hold the war section in check. They had the help in this matter of two of the Conservative members for the City of London, and of some other influential members of the party. The war party in the Cabinet prevented the Turks from suing for peace ; but the peace section prevented any aid being given them to keep on the war ; thus everybody was checkmated and Turkey was tempted to her ruin.

CHAPTER XV.

CABINET DISCUSSIONS AND DIPLOMATIC DEFEATS.

THE war in the East was still raging when the new year came in. Notwithstanding the severity of the winter both in Asia and on the Balkans, the Russians were pushing forward through the snow with the belief that the time had come when no military advantage must be lost. The dread of foreign interference was greater than the dread of frost, which, indeed, seemed to interpose scarcely any obstacles to their movements. On New Year's Day General Gourko with the Russian Imperial Guard crossed the Etropol Balkans, and advanced on the road to Sofia, the great military centre of Western Bulgaria. Here a decisive stand was to be made by the Turks, but they retreated, and Sofia was captured with a loss of only four-and-twenty men. In Asia, Erzeroum was invested on the same day. Early in the next week General Skobeleff and Prince Mirsky penetrated the Central Balkans by the Trojan Pass, and pushing eastward, occupied the village of Kezanlik. They thus commanded the southern entrance to the Schipka Pass, of which General Radetzky closed the northern end. The Turks, who held the pass with

forty-one battalions and sixty guns, were thus placed between two fires, and after a severe engagement were captured by General Radetzky. This defeat destroyed the Turkish resistance. The Russians marched to Adrianople and occupied it without a fight; Suleiman Pacha with the relics of the Turkish army meanwhile falling back to Kavala, on the coast of the Ægean, from whence he embarked for Constantinople. The whole Balkan peninsula thus lay at the feet of a conqueror. There was nothing to stay the advance on Gallipoli; and even the defence of Constantinople must take place in its own outworks.

While these events had been going on in the East the agitation at home had not diminished. The new year found public bodies of all kinds meeting to deprecate any interference in the war. A new outbreak of impatience on the part of sympathizers with the indebted Turks had taken place, and the cry for war was being urged with renewed vehemence. On the 29th of December, two days after the instructions given to Lord Augustus Loftus to sound the Emperor as to his willingness to make peace, and on the very day on which Prince Gortschakoff's reply came, it was publicly announced that the Sultan had asked the Government to approach the Emperor "with the view of bringing about negotiations for peace," and that the Government had consented to do so. It was at once represented by the Government organs that Turkey had sued for peace, and when Prince Gortschakoff's answer was announced, it was added, with equal incorrectness, that Russia had

refused the request. It was in fact on a totally different point that the supposed rebuff by Russia had been given. On the 13th of December, three days after the fall of Plevna, the Government had sent the Emperor of Russia a new despatch more minutely defining British interests than that of the 6th of May. In this despatch the British Cabinet expressed the hope that if the Russians advanced south of the Balkans no attempt would be made to occupy Constantinople or the Dardanelles, for if this was done, "the Queen's Government must hold themselves free to take whatever course might appear to them necessary for the protection of British interests."* To this new request and the implied threat of interference which accompanied it Prince Gortschakoff replied on the 16th of December, recalling the assurances given in the despatch of seven months before,† and repeated in the Emperor's conversation with Colonel Wellesley‡ on the 30th of July, that Constantinople should only be occupied if it was absolutely necessary to do so. "If the obstinacy or illusions of the Porte," said Prince Gortschakoff, "shall oblige his Majesty to pursue his military operations in order to dictate a peace responding to the openly proclaimed object of the war, his Imperial Majesty has always reserved to himself, and still continues to claim in regard to this point the full right of action which is the claim of every belligerent."§ The despatch concluded by

* "Turkey," III. (1878), No. 1. † See Chap. XIV. p. 335.

‡ Id., p. 346.

§ "Turkey," III. (1878), No. 2.

asking that the British interests which this proceeding might touch should be further defined, so that some means might be found to reconcile those interests with the interests of Russia.

This despatch reached London on the 2nd of January; and the Duke of Argyll points out that its substance was known by telegraph a fortnight earlier.* But there were dissensions in the Cabinet, and the great expression of public opinion in favour of peace had cowed the war party and strengthened the party of neutrality. The peace element consequently spoke for the whole Cabinet. On the 2nd of January Lord Carnarvon was addressing a deputation of South African merchants, and went out of his way to make some reassuring remarks on the Eastern Question. He declared that, though Plevna had fallen—as everybody must have expected—the fall had made no material change in the situation, “and therefore our attitude remains much the same, watchful as regards all real British interests, friendly as regards other nations, neutral as regards the belligerents.” As to the supposed peace overtures, he explained that England had not offered to mediate, still less to intervene, but had merely conveyed messages from one belligerent to the other. And as to the supposed insulting character of Russia’s reply, “whatever,” said Lord Carnarvon, “be the view taken by persons of different opinions as to the fruit which they [the peace overtures] have borne, I wholly dissent from the idea that there is

* “Eastern Question,” Vol. II. p. 68.

any affront or insult conveyed to England. It seems to me unreasonable and without foundation to suppose such a thing." A strong rebuke of the war excitement concluded the speech.

This striking declaration had a most reassuring effect on the public mind. The Funds rose a quarter per cent. The Ministerial journals, however, joined Lord Carnarvon's name with those of Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury in their personal denunciations of the peace party in the Cabinet. In doing this they represented the views of their chief. There was a Cabinet meeting on the 3rd of January, the day after Lord Carnarvon spoke, and three weeks later he told the House of Lords what happened at that meeting in respect of his speech. "On that day, in the Cabinet," said Lord Carnarvon, "the noble Earl, the Prime Minister, thought himself at liberty to condemn very severely the language that I had used. My Lords, I need not restate the terms of that controversy on either side; I took time to consider the course which it was my duty to take, and then in a Memorandum which I had drawn up, but with which I think it unnecessary to trouble the House, I recapitulated what had passed, and having vindicated the position I had taken I reaffirmed in the hearing of my colleagues and without any contradiction the propositions I had then laid down. The noble Earl, the Prime Minister, was good enough to ask me for a copy of it, and so this matter ended; but no public or private disavowal was uttered, or hinted at, with regard to what I then said. I have

therefore felt myself justified, and I still feel myself justified, in believing that where no such disapproval was uttered I had not misrepresented the opinion of Her Majesty's Government at that time." Lord Beaconsfield had in fact been compelled to give way; and the attitude represented first by the minatory despatch of the 13th of December and secondly by the resolution to call Parliament together three weeks earlier than usual, had to be given up. As a consequence, Lord Carnarvon's peaceful assurances were left uncontradicted, and the mildest of answers was given to Prince Gortschakoff's request for a definition of the British interests newly involved. In a reply sent on the 12th of January not a word was said about the danger of a temporary occupation of Constantinople, and Russia was only asked to give an assurance that no Russian force should be sent to the Peninsula of Gallipoli. This request was telegraphed to St. Petersburg, and on the 13th of January Lord Augustus Loftus saw Prince Gortschakoff and gave him the message. Prince Gortschakoff replied on the 15th of January that the Russian Government had no intention of occupying Gallipoli unless the Turkish regular troops should concentrate there, and that he hoped the Queen's Government did not contemplate the occupation of the Peninsula, which would be a departure from neutrality and encourage the Porte to resist.

On the 17th of January Parliament met, and all the world was astonished to find that there was no reason for its meeting. The Queen's Speech was

pacific. It devoted ten paragraphs to the Eastern Question but said nothing about the late communications with Russia as to Constantinople and Gallipoli. It repeated the declaration of neutrality, said that neither of the belligerents had infringed the conditions on which that neutrality was founded, and expressed the willing belief "that both parties are desirous to respect them, so far as it may be in their power." The only hint as to the future was contained in the curious phrase—"I cannot conceal from myself that, should hostilities unfortunately be prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent on me to adopt measures of precaution. Such measures could not be effectually taken without adequate preparation, and I trust to the liberality of my Parliament to supply the means which may be required for that purpose." With respect to the prospects of peace, the Speech described the appeal of the Porte to the Powers and their refusal to comply with it, then its separate appeal to England and the inquiry consequently addressed to the Emperor of Russia, and his answer, in which, said the Speech, "he expressed his earnest desire for peace, and stated, at the same time, his opinion as to the course to be pursued." Communications were still going on between the belligerents and it was earnestly trusted "that they may lead to a pacific solution of the points at issue, and to a termination of the war."

We know from Lord Derby's speech in the House of Lords on the 8th of April that the calling

together of Parliament on the 17th of January was "a compromise on a proposition that Parliament should meet much earlier than it did."* The Queen's Speech was in like manner a compromise. It was an official repetition of the assurances which Lord Derby had given on the 28th of November, which Lord Carnarvon had repeated on the 2nd of January, and which the Prime Minister had "condemned very severely in the Cabinet Council on the next day." It mixed in with these assurances a single threatening phrase to please the Prime Minister, and to leave the way open for his policy to come in when the occasion for it was ripe. It was still thought desirable and possible to keep up as towards the public the tone which, in Cabinet Council, Lord Beaconsfield had repudiated and rebuked; but a back-door of retreat from this peaceful position was left open. The rumour of an intention to send the Fleet to the Dardanelles, which had come from Constantinople on Christmas Eve, really represented the intention with which Parliament had been originally called together. On the 12th of January this proposal had been actually discussed in the Cabinet, but no resolution had been come to. At the meetings of the Cabinet on the 14th and 15th Lord Derby was absent from illness, and on one of these days,† probably the 14th, the resolution to send the Fleet to the Dardanelles

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 790.

† See Lord Carnarvon's speech on his resignation of office, in Hansard, Vol. 237, cols. 438, 439. There is some confusion of dates in the speech. Lord Carnarvon says the resolution was come to on the 15th, but his letter of resignation, written, he says, "on the following day," is dated the 15th.

was adopted. On the next day Lord Carnarvon gave in his resignation, but Lord Beaconsfield sent him a message through Mr. Montagu Corry that subsequent telegrams had induced him to change his mind and that the Fleet would not go. On Wednesday the 16th Lord Carnarvon was at the Cabinet Council, though his resignation still remained in the hands of the Prime Minister, who returned it to him on the day after the opening of Parliament with the statement that there was no important difference between Lord Carnarvon and himself. The agreement thus patched up was made to look like absolute unanimity, and the Prime Minister in the House of Lords, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, strongly reaffirmed the principle of neutrality. But not a word was said about the new assurances as to Constantinople and Gallipoli which the Emperor of Russia had sent only two days before. Yet it was those assurances which induced the Prime Minister to postpone the resolution to send the Fleet to the Dardanelles and enabled the Ministry to appear in the attitude of peaceful neutrality and perfect unanimity when the curtain rose upon them.

The debate on the Address had a very reassuring effect. The paragraph in the Speech about "some unexpected occurrence," which might render measures of precaution needful, had created some alarm. We now know that such measures had already been resolved on though it had not been decided whether they should consist of a Vote of Credit, or of an in-

crease in the Army Estimates. Sir Stafford Northcote, however, was most candid and open in stating to the House of Commons his hopes of peace. He was able to tell the House that on the 9th of January the Porte, by the advice of the British Government, had taken the step indicated in the Russian reply of the 29th of December and had sent to the Russian commanders to open communications for an armistice. The Russian conditions of peace, the acceptance of which by Turkey was to be the basis of the armistice, were still on their way to the Russian commanders, and two Turkish Envoys were also on their way to the Russian headquarters. The Russian demands were consequently not then known to the Government. "Therefore," said Sir Stafford Northcote, "our position is one of considerable delicacy and anxiety. We trust and we are ready to believe that the proposals that will be made by the Russians will be in accordance with the declarations which they made before the beginning of the war, but it is impossible to say what may be the effect which these hostilities and this long struggle may have had upon the position and views of the Russians. It is therefore necessary that we should maintain an attitude of watchfulness and reserve until we see and know what it is they are prepared to demand. The answer cannot be very much longer unknown to us, and when we know it we shall see more clearly where we are."* Mr. Gladstone expressed his great satisfaction with the Chancellor's

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 101.

speech. The passage in the Queen's Speech about unexpected events had received a hostile interpretation in the City; and it was generally regarded "as implying that in the view of Her Majesty's Government the time had come when they felt it to be their duty to make to Parliament a proposal for an increase in the military establishment of the country, with a view to the present state of the Eastern Question." But the Chancellor of the Exchequer had explained the passage differently, and Mr. Gladstone repeated the words—"Until we know the Russian demands and conditions we have no proposals to make." "Let my honourable friend," he said, "confirm the accuracy of the report that I make of that portion of his speech." The Chancellor of the Exchequer nodded his assent, and Mr. Gladstone, after replying to the mover of the Address and stating his opinion that the demand for increased armaments would be a very serious one whenever it was made, said:—"In the meantime we accept with thankfulness his frank declaration. I have never known an instance when the speech of a Minister has added so much, and so much that is satisfactory, to the speech delivered from the Throne. And as it is the custom, by form of ceremony, to call the Speech from the Throne a gracious speech, I am also thankful for the gracious speech delivered from that bench. I thank my right honourable friend for the relief he has given, not to our minds only, but to the mind of the country."*

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 107.

It was found when the two speeches were compared on the next day that Lord Beaconsfield's was less gracious and less satisfactory than that of Sir Stafford Northcote. It contained, moreover, the inevitable misreadings of facts which were in everybody's recollection. Speaking of the supposed isolation of England, Lord Beaconsfield said:—"I should like to know whose influence it was that obtained the armistice for Servia? It was isolated England. It was this country in a state of isolation which effected that which could not be otherwise effected." This statement was the very reverse of the fact. England's proposal of an armistice for Servia had no result.* The war went on for a month after Lord Derby's rejected ultimatum, and at last Russia sent word that unless an armistice of six weeks was accepted within forty-eight hours, General Ignatieff should leave Constantinople. The armistice was then accepted within twenty-four hours. There was another passage in Lord Beaconsfield's speech which people remembered with surprise when, only a week later, the Ministerial differences and the sudden changes of policy they had produced could be concealed no longer. "You have no right to assume," said Lord Beaconsfield, "that ours is a vacillating policy unless you can produce facts to establish such a statement. You cannot, you have no right to make such an accusation depend merely on surmise and innuendo and anonymous communications." All this is fair, forcible, and conclusive argument. But Lord Beaconsfield went on to say:—

* See Chap. XI. pp. 242 and 243.

“Why! the noble Earl knows very well that there is not the slightest evidence that there has ever been any difference between my opinions and those of my colleagues whom he has quoted with approbation and sympathy. I say that from the very first there never has been any hesitation by Her Majesty’s Government as to the course of policy which they would pursue with regard to these great occurrences taking place in Eastern Europe.”* So spoke the Prime Minister, and Lord Salisbury followed him by attributing the rumours of Ministerial dissensions to “our old friends the newspapers.”† Yet at that moment both Ministers knew that Lord Carnarvon’s peace speech had been severely rebuked by Lord Beaconsfield, that his resignation was then in the Prime Minister’s hands, and that the resolution of the Cabinet to send the Fleet to the Dardanelles had just been rescinded in order to prevent the difference and division in the Ministry from becoming known to the world.

Sir Stafford Northcote’s pledge to the House of Commons was not kept. It represented only the momentary mood of a Ministry in which two conflicting influences were struggling for mastery, and whose policy vacillated from day to day. The resolution of the 14th or 15th of January to send the Fleet to the Dardanelles was in response to a telegram sent by Mr. Layard on the former day, that reports had reached him that the Russians were marching on Gallipoli; and the rescinding of that resolution was

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 31.

† Id., col. 53.

based, as has already been pointed out, on the receipt, on the 15th, of Prince Gortschakoff's assurances that Gallipoli should not be occupied. On the very day of the opening of Parliament Mr. Layard began a series of similar telegrams. On the 17th he said the Russians were marching on Adrianople and there was every reason to believe they would then march on Constantinople. Crowds of refugees were pouring into the city, it was even reported that the Sultan was about to fly to Broussa, and a rumour that the people were being massacred was telegraphed by our Ambassador to London. The Cabinet met on the 23rd of January, and on the strength of these telegrams and of a warlike deputation of members of Parliament which had visited Sir Stafford Northcote on the day before, a resolution was passed to send the Fleet to Constantinople and to ask for a Vote of Credit of six millions. This was on a Wednesday; and at seven o'clock that evening orders were sent to Admiral Hornby to sail at once for the Dardanelles and proceed with the Fleet to Constantinople. He was to take no part in the contest, but to keep the waterway of the Straits open, and to communicate with Besika Bay for further orders. Twenty-four hours and twenty-five minutes later another telegram was sent to the Admiral, annulling the order to proceed to Constantinople and directing him to anchor at Besika Bay. This countermanding order reached the Fleet when it was opposite the Dardanelles forts; and it at once turned back to Besika Bay to await commands.

This sudden change of policy was adopted to prevent a rupture in the Cabinet. The resolution of the day before had caused the immediate resignation of Lord Derby and the second and final retirement of Lord Carnarvon; but the Foreign Secretary withdrew his resignation when the counter-order to the Fleet had been despatched. The Vote of Credit was persisted in, and on the 24th of January the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice that on Monday the 28th he would move "a Supplementary Estimate for the Naval and Military Services." An hour afterwards the Duke of Argyll asked a question about this notice in the House of Lords, and after some urging, Lord Beaconsfield replied. The Duke of Argyll had referred to Sir Stafford Northcote's pledge, and the Prime Minister said:—"An observation was casually made by one of the Ministers in the other House that no motion such as that of which notice has been given should be made until the conditions of the Russian Government were known. But at that time we had reason to believe, and had received information which had induced us to accept it as true, that those conditions would be made known immediately. Now a considerable period has elapsed since then, and the noble Duke must feel that the course which Her Majesty's Government might think it their duty to recommend Parliament to take cannot depend on the will of any foreign Government in keeping back any information as to the conditions."* The considerable period between the giving

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 436.

✓ of Sir Stafford Northcote's pledge and the resolution of the Cabinet not to keep it, was a little less than six days. His statement, moreover, was not an observation casually made, it was a deliberate assurance, repeated word for word by Mr. Gladstone, and at the moment of such repetition accepted and acknowledged by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The absence of the Russian conditions was, moreover, only the excuse for the proposal, not its origin. It had been before the Cabinet at an earlier period, and had, in fact, been partly resolved on before the Queen's Speech was written. The Russian conditions were actually communicated to the Foreign Office by Count Schouvaloff on the 25th of January, and in the House of Lords, on the same evening, were declared by the Prime Minister to "furnish a basis for an armistice." Yet their satisfactory nature did not prevent the Government from proceeding with the Vote on the Monday following.

There is a curious discrepancy between the evidence of the Blue-book as to the time at which the Russian peace bases were communicated to Lord Derby, and the statement respecting them made in the House of Lords by Lord Beaconsfield. He expressly told the House that the order which stopped the Fleet was sent, because, "since we have come to the resolution to take these steps, we have become acquainted with the conditions—the proposed conditions—of peace; and having those conditions before us we are of opinion that they furnish a basis for an armistice, and therefore we have given direc-

tions to the Admiral to remain in Besika Bay, and not to enter into the Straits.”* Now the order to the Admiral was sent at twenty-five minutes after seven on the evening of the 24th of January; and the Russian terms of peace were communicated by Count Schouvaloff on the 25th, and had only been a few hours in hand when Lord Beaconsfield spoke. On the 24th, however, Mr. Layard had telegraphed a version of the Russian terms in which a curious error had occurred, and Sir S. Northcote told the House of Commons that it was because of this error the Fleet had been ordered back. Mr. Layard made the alarming statement that the question of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles was to be settled between the Emperor and the Sultan. The telegraph clerk wrote “Congress” instead of “Sultan.” A settlement of the question between Russia and Europe was what England desired, but an attempted settlement between the Emperor and the Sultan was what England would not allow. Next morning the clerk’s mistake was found out, and the Government then had before it a statement that one of the conditions of our neutrality was to be set at nought. If, therefore, the Fleet was ordered back through the mistake, the order to proceed ought to have gone at once when the mistake was found out. But no such order went. In the course of the same day Count Schouvaloff came to the Foreign Office with the Russian conditions, which Lord Beaconsfield, on the same evening, declared to be satisfactory, but which

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 436.

Sir S. Northcote, three days later, declared to be most unsatisfactory and to bear out Mr. Layard's alarming description of them. Still, however, the Fleet was left in its anchorage at Besika Bay. It had, in fact, been suddenly ordered to return thither, not on account of the misreading of Mr. Layard's telegram, but solely because of Lord Derby's resignation, and for the one purpose of getting that resignation withdrawn.

The bases of peace thus considered satisfactory by the Prime Minister on the 25th and unsatisfactory by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 28th of January were substantially the old demands of Europe, with the modifications which the defeat of the Turks had necessarily introduced. Bulgaria, within limits not less than those proposed by the Conference, was to be an autonomous tributary principality with a national Christian government, a native militia, and no Turkish troops except at some points to be determined. Montenegro, Roumania, and Servia were to be independent, with some increase of territory. Bosnia and Herzegovina were to have autonomous administration sufficiently guaranteed, and the other Christian provinces similar reforms. These were terms which had been anticipated, and which all Europe agreed were needful for the security of the Christian population. There were in addition to these the payment of an indemnity for the expenses of the war, "in a pecuniary, territorial, or other form to be decided hereafter," and an "ulterior understanding for safeguarding the rights and interests of

Russia in the Straits." Both these items had been foreshadowed to the British Government many months before. The whole of the terms were, however, kept secret till the Turks had accepted them. This concealment raised natural and just suspicion, though its policy in preventing the Turks from snatching at encouragements to reject the terms became evident at once ; for on the 28th Sir Stafford Northcote spoke against them in the House of Commons, and on the 30th Austria addressed a note to Russia declaring that it would recognize no settlement which had not been sanctioned by the Powers. The terms would, in fact, have kept Bosnia and Herzegovina out of the hands of Austria. On the 31st the Turkish Plenipotentiaries and the Grand Duke Nicholas signed at Adrianople the armistice and preliminaries of peace.

Meanwhile the Vote of Credit had been formally proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 28th of January, Lord Carnarvon had retired from the Cabinet rather than sanction it, and had explained the reasons for his retirement. Lord Derby had been out of the Cabinet for forty-eight hours, and while Sir Stafford Northcote was proposing the Vote in the Commons, Lord Derby, who had reoccupied his seat on the Ministerial bench, was explaining to the House of Lords why his resignation had been given in and then withdrawn. Sir Stafford Northcote's speech showed that the peace influence in the Cabinet had been weakened by these events. It was an alarmist speech. So far from re-echoing the approval of the Russian terms of peace which had

been expressed by the Prime Minister three days before, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that they amounted to the dismemberment of Turkey. He particularly objected to the erection of Bulgaria into an "autonomous tributary principality," and pointed out that it was not administrative autonomy, but autonomy under a Prince, probably nominated by the Emperor of Russia, that was now proposed. Of the proposed indemnity Sir Stafford Northcote said:—"The condition is put in such a manner as to be very large and vague and open. Nothing is said as to its amount, and nothing is said—or rather, I should say, something which is more significant than silence is said—as to its form. Now with regard to an indemnity which is to be paid by a pecuniary subsidy, that is a matter which rests between the two belligerents alone; no one else could have anything to say to that, but we all know very well that the financial position of Turkey is not such as to enable her to raise a large pecuniary indemnity. Then, even if it were in her power to comply with this condition, it might be the case from the way in which the condition is framed, that Russia in deciding how she should receive the indemnity might in short elect to receive it in territory; or she might insist on having partly a pecuniary and partly a territorial compensation, which would be of the greatest possible interest, not only to Turkey, but to all the other European Powers. I have nothing whatever to guide me in the matter, but as I have put other hypothetical cases, if the Committee will allow me, I

will also put this one—not, I admit, in the least likely to occur, but showing what may happen. Russia might say that she would take the port of Salonica or the port of Smyrna.” Cries of “Oh ! oh !” greeted this supposition, and the Chancellor continued :—“ I am not saying that she will do this, I am only putting it as an extreme case. She may undoubtedly demand some territorial indemnity, and it may be of serious importance to Europe if she does.”*

This part of Sir Stafford Northcote’s speech is one of the most remarkable instances of forgetfulness ever noted in a statesman. The whole nation was waiting on his words. A crowded House of Commons was listening to him for guidance in a difficult crisis, yet he not only concealed important information of which the Government had been in full possession for seven months, but actually declared that he did not possess it. “ I have nothing whatever to guide me in the matter,” he said, speaking of the territorial compensation Russia asked, and he went on to illustrate his complete ignorance by putting the impossible case of Russia requiring the port of Salonica or of Smyrna. Everybody now knows that the Ministers had received first from the Russian Chancellor through Lord Augustus Loftus, then from Count Schouvaloff in personal communication with Lord Derby, and later from the Czar himself through Colonel Wellesley, the most solemn pledges as to the demands Russia would make.† They had

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 543.

† See Chapter XIV. p. 346.

known for seven months that the territorial compensation required would be the bit of Bessarabia taken from Russia in 1856, and a portion of Armenia, including probably the port of Batoum. They had even gone so far as to express their sense of the moderation of the Russian demands; and they had a reminder of what those demands were in the very words of the bases of peace read by the Chancellor in the earlier part of his speech, in which the independence of Roumania was coupled with "a sufficient territorial indemnity." The despatches recording all these communications had been kept back from Parliament; nobody knew of them outside the Cabinet; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, discussing the meaning of a paper which was prepared on the presumption that these declarations were known and accepted, tells the House of Commons, "I have nothing whatever to guide me in the matter." None of his colleagues corrected this lapse of memory. The whole question of the Vote of Credit was thus debated by a House of Commons from which not only the most important information which could guide its decision had been kept back, but which had the assurance that even the Ministers themselves did not possess any information, and had nothing whatever to guide them in the matter.

The debate seemed at first to be going against the Government. Its supporters were alarmed at the division suddenly revealed in the united Cabinet, and nobody knew how far the split might run in the Conservative ranks. The Liberals had hitherto kept up

the whole external agitation, and their meetings and protests had begun again as soon as the new attitude of the Government had been shown. Yet there was much popular feeling on the other side, and the supporters of the Government made an appeal to it. A song was being sung in the music-halls the refrain of which has become historical :

“ We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo ! if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too.”

The song found its way from the music-halls into the streets. Bands of young men sang it in breaking up meetings which had been called to protest against war. It was quoted in Parliament by Sir Wilfrid Lawson. It has even introduced a new designation into English politics. The Jingoës are not a party, since there are some in both parties. They are not necessarily Conservatives, though the Conservative Prime Minister is their head and chief. Some of them may be Liberals, though all the Liberal leaders are against them. “Jingoism” is a feeling rather than a principle. It arises out of the pride which all Englishmen feel in the greatness and the power of the Empire. It is patriotism with a twist. It is a reaction from too exclusive care for home affairs which rushes to the other extreme of a too exclusive interest in foreign concerns. Liberalism has sometimes seemed to care but little about influence abroad, if we can be peaceful, prosperous, and progressive at home. This neglect of foreign influence has been only in appearance, for Mr. Gladstone's Government threw the

shield of England over Belgium in the Franco-German war, and chastised the King of Ashantee for meddling with some of our allies. Jingoism, however, would go out of its way to find occasions for self-assertion. For the quiet dignity of conscious strength it substitutes the boastfulness of suspected weakness. It is the politics of boasting. Like the *nouveau riche* who must brag of his wealth, the political Jingo thinks England is weak unless she is always asserting her strength. His idea of true patriotism is being afraid of Russia. His tone in political debate is that of Lord Cranbrook. His ideal of political success is Lord Beaconsfield, whose life has illustrated the song of the sons of Korah, "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself."

While the debate on the War Vote was proceeding in Parliament there was a strong outburst of this feeling in the country. Meetings to protest against war were invaded by noisy roughs singing the Jingo song. At Sheffield a great meeting was held in favour of the Vote. In the City a meeting had been called at three o'clock on the 31st of January at the Cannon Street Hotel to protest against it. Just before two o'clock crowds of men appeared showing post-cards which called them to the hotel at two. A meeting of Governors of the Orphan Working School was being held in the large hall, and the mob which filled all the corridors and the great staircase broke the glass doors, dispersed the assembly, and carried away pieces of glass as trophies. They then held a meeting outside till a man came

and led them off to the Guildhall yard. The Guildhall happened to be open, like the church-door Mr. Wemmick happened to find open, and the crowd went in to hold a meeting, just as Mr. Wemmick with similar unpremeditation went in to be married. Lord Mayor Owden was at hand, like Mr. Wemmick's parson, and a resolution was ready, like the gloves Mr. Wemmick so fortunately found in his pocket. The resolution expressing confidence in the Government was passed, and as, by a fortunate coincidence, Mr. R. N. Fowler, chairman of the Conservative Association, was in the Hall, he and others were sent off to the House of Commons to present it. They were received by Lord John Manners, who naturally expressed his gratification at this spontaneous exhibition of confidence in the Government and hoped for more of them. More of them followed. The roughs rushed to the rescue. More meetings were broken up, and in London, at least, a war fervour was got up. A meeting was held at Exeter Hall in favour of the Government on the 6th of February. Next day a crowd of so-called medical students met in Trafalgar Square, and went down to see Mr. Cross and to cheer for war at Westminster. On the 28th of February the Court of Common Council passed a vote of confidence in the Government by an overwhelming majority.

Meanwhile there had been a long debate with a dramatic ending. Mr. Forster moved an amendment to the Vote of Credit, which referred to the assurance in the Queen's Speech that the conditions of our neutrality had not been infringed and declared that no

information since received had justified any departure from the policy of neutrality and peace. On the same evening some papers were presented to Parliament containing Prince Gortschakoff's telegraphic replies, through Lord Augustus Loftus, to questions by Lord Derby as to the meaning of the terms of peace. Prince Gortschakoff explained that the article requiring an ulterior arrangement about the Straits meant an arrangement with Europe, and not with Turkey, and that the Emperor was willing to suppress it altogether.* Thus the main argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the Vote was cut from under him. Mr. Cross read the despatch to the House in the course of a fiery speech; and asked in reply why the Russians were still advancing. He taunted the Opposition with being the friends of Russia, an observation he immediately withdrew, but which was afterwards taken up outside the House. Speaking of the movement against the Government and the resolutions passed at public meetings, he said that a lying spirit was abroad. Mr. Bright made a powerful appeal for a peaceful policy. He spoke of the difficulty manufacturers had in finding employment for their workpeople, and urged the Government "to be extremely careful that not one single word is said, not one single act done, that can shake confidence in business, and can bring an increase of the troubles—the inevitable troubles with which for a time we are likely to be surrounded."† On the second night, Mr. Lowe said:—"Whenever the Prime Minister has a chance

* "Turkey," V. (1878), No. 15.

† Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 802.

he has always done something to let it be thought that his opinions and those of the great majority of the people of this country are against the delivery of those wretched populations. He did it a year and a half ago in the celebrated speech about a second and a third campaign. This year his tone implied disbelief in the word of the Emperor, and was in the highest degree unbecoming. I would suggest a simple remedy. Muzzle your Prime Minister. If you cannot do that let it be known that in these frisky hours he does not represent the opinions of the Government." * On the third night Mr. Gladstone spoke, and asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to postpone the Vote, with liberty to renew it if the Government thought fit, when it could be shown that the money was wanted. Mr. Hardy rejected the suggestion with scorn, and drew a frightful picture of the dangers which assailed the Empire, which Parliament did not know, and could not know. "It may be," he said, "that you grudge giving us these six millions now, but if you refuse them to us perhaps you would have to spend six hundred millions hereafter." * This was the tone of all the Ministerial speeches. Yet what Parliament could not know and did not know was the mutual assurances which had already passed and repassed between these Ministers and the Emperor and Chancellor of Russia.

A personal and party episode in this debate throws some light on the state of public opinion. Mr. Hardy taunted the Liberal party with the loss of

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 856.

† Id., col. 979.

Lord Fortescue and Lord Fitzwilliam. On the fourth night Sir Charles Dilke replied. "What did the recent elections show? In Perthshire the Liberal poll had been increased and the Conservative vote had been diminished; at Leith an opponent of the Vote had been returned, but even the Conservative candidate at Leith had pledged himself against the Vote. At Greenock, Perth, and Marlborough opponents of the Vote had been returned. At Oxford the city had been placarded by the Conservative agent to the effect that the Conservative member (Mr. Hall) would have stood for the county, but that his seat would infallibly have been lost to the Government." Speaking of the breaking up of the Cannon Street meeting Sir Charles Dilke said "he could supply the names and addresses of those who organized the disturbance, and of the workmen from Woolwich Arsenal who committed it, to whom their railway fares and a gratuity were given, who afterwards went to the Guildhall and who then returned to Woolwich and disturbed a meeting there."* Sir William Harcourt on the same night made a brilliant reply to Mr. Hardy whom he described as "the Achilles of the Conservative party,

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,"

and advised Mr. Gladstone "to compose a new Iliad, in which he might recite the wrath of that Achilles and the innumerable woes it had wrought for Greece."† Sir William Harcourt asked what the Government policy was to be, and promised the Ministers the

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 1104.

† Id., col. 1115.

unanimous support of the House and the nation if they would declare a policy worthy to command the sympathies of a free people.

The fifth night of the debate was Thursday the 7th of February. But on Wednesday the 6th Lord Derby received from Mr. Layard a telegram, dated on the 5th, stating that notwithstanding the armistice the Russians were pushing on to Constantinople; that the Turks had been compelled to evacuate Silivria, a port on the Sea of Marmora; that the Russian General declared that he should occupy Tchataldja, a part of the Turkish line of defence which extends across the peninsula; and that the Porte was in great alarm and could not understand the Russian proceedings. On the next day the 7th Mr. Layard telegraphed that the Russians had made as a condition of the armistice the abandonment of the lines of Tchek-medjie, which would leave Constantinople undefended, and that they had actually occupied Tchataldja which is only thirty miles from the city. The alarming telegram of Wednesday got abroad and speedily became a rumour that Constantinople was occupied by the Russians. There was a ball that night at Count Münster's, and the rumour was spread among the guests. Members of Parliament heard of it at the Speaker's levée. On the next day there was a panic in the City as the London rumour came back in telegraphic echoes from Continental capitals. "Thursday," said the *Times*, "was crowded with rumours, alarms, contradictions, fears, hopes, resolves, uncertainties." The Cabinet met, it was generally believed in haste.

The Liberal leaders got together and agreed to withdraw Mr. Forster's resolution. The House of Commons assembled in great excitement. When questions were over, Lord Hartington rose and asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if there was any truth in the rumours of the advance of the Russians or the occupation of Constantinople, and Lord Granville asked the same question of Lord Derby in the Lords. Both Ministers replied in identical terms, giving Mr. Layard's telegram, and quoting for the first time the assurance given by the Emperor of Russia to Colonel Wellesley at Biela in July, that he would not occupy Constantinople for the sake of military honour, but only if the march of events rendered it needful. Mr. Forster's amendment was thereupon withdrawn.

A little later in the evening Mr. Bright expressed some doubt as to the truth of the telegram. He pointed out that there was very little certainty in the news which had been communicated. Our Ambassador at the Porte, he said, "has been alarmed several times," and he wished to know whether there was any positive information that made Government believe that whatever had occurred had not occurred by the connivance of the Porte. While Mr. Bright was speaking, a note was handed to Sir Stafford Northcote. He read it with an air of astonishment and passed it to his colleagues, who also seemed surprised. As soon as Mr. Bright sat down the Chancellor rose and said he had something of great importance to communicate. The House listened eagerly. Then the Chancellor read a

note which Lord Derby had received from Count Schouvaloff, and which he was then reading to the House of Lords. The Russian Ambassador had sent Mr. Layard's telegram to St. Petersburg and Prince Gortschakoff had telegraphed back: "The order has been given to stop hostilities along the whole line in Europe and in Asia. There is not a word of truth in the rumours which have reached you." Loud cheers and laughter broke out at this announcement, and the Chancellor added, "I must express to the House my regret that the circumstances should be of so dramatic a character as they have been. It was not, of course, our fault."* Now arose the question whether the amendment was to be withdrawn. Mr. Forster, however, persisted in the withdrawal. There was another long debate; and the House did not divide till one o'clock, when Lord Hartington and a hundred other members went away without voting, and the House went into Committee on the Vote by a majority of 199—295 to 96. The Vote was passed at a later stage by 328 to 124.

In the very midst of this excitement the Blue Book (Turkey, IX. 1878) was issued, containing the important assurances given and repeated by the Emperor of Russia in the summer of 1877. They had been kept back for six or seven months, and Parliament and the nation were in complete ignorance that such assurances had been given. On the same day the *Daily News* published a long telegram from its special correspondent at Adrianople, detail-

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 1226.

ing a conversation he had had with one of the Ottoman Delegates, Server Pacha, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had gone thither to sign the conditions of the armistice. They had caused the delay in signing by holding out to the last against the autonomy of Bulgaria. But when the signature had been forced from them, their anger at England broke out in bitter reproaches on the men they believed to have betrayed them. "Say this," Server Pacha said to the *Daily News* correspondent, "as coming from Server Pacha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sublime Porte. I have hitherto been a partisan of England and the English alliance. I believed in England to the extent of compromising myself and my Government. I see that I have been mistaken, that I was deceived, or rather, that I have deceived myself. I now abandon the English alliance. I no longer believe in English policy, in the English Government, nor in the English people. I accept the Russian policy and alliance, and am now a partisan of that Power." Another Turkish diplomatist went into closer details and declared that Mr. Layard had encouraged them to resist Russia, and to hope for English aid; and that Lord Beaconsfield had done the same in private conversation with Musurus Pacha. In the excited House on Thursday night Mr. Rylands read these statements. Somewhat later Sir Stafford Northcote read a note from Lord Beaconsfield, "I have only to say that the statement is an infamous fabrication." "In saying that," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

“the noble Lord speaks for himself only.” A few days later Mr. Layard telegraphed that Server Pacha denied that he had made the statements attributed to him; and that he himself had never encouraged the Turks. Server Pacha, however, had spoken to a man whom the English public have learned to trust, and a striking confirmation of his statement in the *Daily News* appeared in the *Times* a few days later. Writing on the 8th of February the *Times* correspondent at Pera said:—“The Turkish Delegates, Server and Namyk Pachas, have but just returned to Constantinople, Server having insisted on making himself fully acquainted with the policy of the new Ministry before he consents to accept an appointment. He openly declares that he left Constantinople for Kezanlik entertaining up to the last moment hopes of English aid, but that henceforth, so long as he remains Minister for Foreign Affairs, his policy will be as Russian as that of the Czar.” Mr. Layard also forgot, when he penned his own denial of Server Pacha’s charges, that in reporting to Lord Derby on the 26th of April 1877 the arguments he had addressed to the Porte, he said he had told the Turkish Ministers, not only that “public opinion in England would not support or approve any Government that was prepared to help Turkey,” but also that “It is of vital importance to Turkey that she should seek to change or modify that opinion.”* This statement alone was enough to raise such expectations as Server Pacha avowed he had entertained, and as Nubar

* “Turkey,” XXV. (1877), No. 211.

Pacha afterwards told the British public that he also had formed. That the words spoken by Server Pacha to the *Daily News* correspondent in the heat and haste of his disappointment, and the sentiments afterwards openly avowed by him as reported by the correspondent of the *Times*, really represented the feeling of the Turks is shown by every action of the Turkish Government from the time when Server and Namyk Pachas signed the terms of the armistice till the signature and publication of the Treaty of San Stefano.

On the day after these debates the Cabinet met and ordered a part of the Fleet to go to Constantinople, for the protection, it was stated, of British subjects. A firman had been obtained by great pressure on the Porte, in January, and it was supposed that this might be used now, but when Admiral Hornby with his six ships arrived at the Dardanelles he found there were no orders there to let him pass, and went back to Besika Bay. The Porte thereupon telegraphed to the Ottoman Ambassador in London that the motive ascribed for this movement of the Fleet, the protection of English subjects, could not in any way be justified, and directed him to urge that the step should not be taken. A firman was then asked for and refused; "but Her Majesty's Government," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer in reply to Lord Hartington, "thought it right to direct the ships to proceed, and they have proceeded accordingly. The Governor of the Straits protested against their passing, but in

compliance with their orders the ships passed on.” * Russia noted this step and sent word that it might oblige her to occupy Constantinople. The Russians, however, did no more than occupy the lines of Tchataldja outside Constantinople, which they were empowered to do under the provisions of the armistice. The Governments of England and Russia afterwards came to a mutual agreement, the one not to occupy Gallipoli nor the lines of Bulair, and the other not to land troops on the European side of the Dardanelles. Both pledged themselves not to occupy the Asiatic shore.

There was a considerable lull in Parliamentary discussion on the Eastern Question after the six-million Vote was passed. Lord Campbell raised a debate in the Lords on the Treaties of 1856 and 1871 ; and the Duke of Argyll, on the 7th of March, originated an important discussion on the former of those treaties. There was perpetual questioning of the Ministers for information in both Houses, but the Ministers had very little to impart. The spending of the money went on apace. The arsenals and navy yards were as busy as though war was actually in prospect, yet both the Army and the Navy Estimates were found to be constructed on a peace basis when they were explained to the House in the first fortnight of March. One curious panic purchase was made. Four huge guns of a hundred tons each were lying at the Elswick factory, where they had been made for the Italian Government. It occurred

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 1623.

to somebody that Russia might buy them, and the Government accordingly stepped in and at any price made them its own. It has never since known what to do with its costly and unmanageable weapons. These Peace Estimates for the Army and Navy were produced in the midst of a strong war excitement outside. This excitement was fed first by the long delay in signing the Peace Treaty; and next by the apparent reluctance of both Russia and Turkey to make its provisions known. The signature had been delayed for two reasons, first, because the Turkish representatives would not sign the death warrant of the Empire by giving autonomy to Bulgaria; secondly, because the Russians wished to proclaim it on the anniversary of the emancipation of the serfs. The treaty was signed at San Stefano on the 3rd of March, and in signing it the Turkish Commissioner, Safvet Pacha, showed something of the feeling which Server Pacha had expressed after signing the conditions of the armistice. He broke, it is said, into convulsive sobs; and General Ignatieff said to him, "You see I have always told you that England would leave you in the lurch. The English do not know how to keep their word, everything has happened precisely as I foretold."* The English had kept their word as officially given by Lord Derby. What had been broken was the unofficial encouragements in which the official Turks had too confidently put their trust.

* "Annual Register" (1878), p. 333.

CHAPTER XVI.

*WAR PREPARATIONS, SECRET UNDERSTANDINGS, AND
THE BERLIN TREATY.*

THE nineteen days which passed between the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano and the publication of its full text in the London papers were full of increasing agitation and unrest. As soon as the armistice had been signed in January negotiations for the holding of a Conference had begun. It was first proposed that this Conference should meet at Vienna, but Russia objected. Baden was then suggested, but difficulties arose, and at last it was resolved that the meeting should be a Congress, and should be held at Berlin. Then came the question what should the Congress do, and here differences at once arose between the Governments of England and Russia. Lord Derby justly demanded that the whole Treaty should be officially before the Congress, but Russia would only admit that the Treaty should be practically before the Congress without being actually submitted to it. The other Powers could not understand the difference. Austria declared that she entirely shared the English view, but regarded it as attained by Prince Gortschakoff's declaration; and "Count Andrassy thinks," said Count Beust in a communication on the 14th of

March, "that under these circumstances it is neither for the interest of England nor of Austria to raise difficulties in regard to this question."* The British Cabinet, however, persisted in raising difficulties. It was being violently urged to a warlike policy by its supporters at home. There had been much stir about the demand of Russia for the Turkish Fleet, and Lord Derby declined to tell the House of Lords the whereabouts of the Sultan's ironclads. At length, on the 1st of March the Foreign Secretary announced that the demand for the ships had been withdrawn, and that the Treaty of Peace would probably be signed on the next day. Shortly afterwards some items in the Treaty leaked out and increased the excitement of public opinion. The delay in publishing the whole was regarded as a Russian intrigue specially directed against Great Britain. Meanwhile, the rumours which under Lord Beaconsfield's Administration have so strangely foreshadowed resolutions of the Cabinet, spoke of an Expeditionary Force, and were so circumstantial as to name Lord Napier of Magdala for its Commander, and Sir Garnet Wolseley as Chief of the Staff. War preparations went on all through March, while Europe was waiting for the Treaty and the discussion about its being placed before the Congress was proceeding between England and Russia. On the 26th of March came Russia's final reply that the Emperor's Government "leaves to other Powers the liberty of raising such questions at the Congress as they may think fit

* "Turkey," XXIV. (1878), No. 2.

to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions."* Lord Derby did not regard this reply as fatal to the Congress, but it was read in that light by the rest of the Ministers.

Meanwhile, the Preliminary Treaty of Peace, signed at San Stefano, had been published. It appeared in full in the London papers on the 22nd of March, and was officially communicated to the Government on the next day. Looking back on it in the light of the official correspondence since issued, it is seen to be in nearly all respects what the Government had been led to anticipate. It began by giving Montenegro a new frontier and ceding to it the small Adriatic port of Antivari. Servia and Roumania were to be independent, the former receiving some increase of territory, and the latter taking the Dobrudscha from the Turks, as the "sufficient territorial indemnity" for the retrocession of the strip of Bessarabia to Russia. Bulgaria was constituted an autonomous Principality under a Prince to be elected by the people, but not from any reigning family. It was to be tributary to the Sultan, and to be organized under the protectorate of Russia, which was to occupy the country for two years. It was somewhat larger than the Bulgaria set forth by the Conference at Constantinople; having been extended southwards in order to give it an outlet on the *Ægean* as well as on the *Euxine*. Count Schouvaloff had told Lord Derby in the previous June

* "Turkey," XXIV. (1878), No. 19.

that its separation into two provinces was impossible. This arrangement cut European Turkey in two ; but the Turkish Government was to have a right of way through the subject Principality for its troops. In Asia, a portion of Armenia including the port of Batoum was to be ceded to Russia, and a heavy indemnity was to be paid to that Power by the Turks. The reforms which the Constantinople Conference had proposed were at once to be introduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the revenues of those Provinces to be appropriated till the 1st of March 1880, "to indemnify the families of refugees and inhabitants, victims of late events, without distinction of race or creed, and to the local needs of the country." The organic law of 1868 was to be applied in Crete, and analogous reforms were to be introduced "into Epirus and Thessaly and the other parts of Turkey in Europe not included in the present deed." The Russian troops were to evacuate European Turkey in three months and Asiatic Turkey in six.

The Treaty bore the title "Preliminaries of Peace." The *Times* described it as on the whole providing a basis for settlement. "There is much to criticise," said that journal, "much to resist ; but there is nothing beyond the pale of discussion." Austria led the way in objecting to it ; and the war vote of sixty millions of florins which the Delegations had been reluctant to grant, was passed at once on the declaration of Count Andrassy that the great interests of the Empire would be compromised. The question

chiefly discussed at home, however, was not the Treaty but the Congress; and on the receipt of the Russian communication of the 26th of March, the Cabinet resolved on some steps which at least looked in the direction of war. The Ministers determined not to consent to enter the Congress, but to call out the Reserves, to send for a contingent of Indian troops, to seize Cyprus, and to make an armed landing on the coast of Syria. Lord Derby opposed all these measures which were finally resolved on in the meeting of the Cabinet on the 27th of March. He pointed out that the seizure of Cyprus and the occupation of a part of Syria would set the example of a general plunder and partition of the Turkish Empire, which Austria and Russia would speedily follow. Russia would at once seize Constantinople; Austria would take her share of territory, and there would be the gravest danger of a general European war. These momentous resolutions were taken on Wednesday and nothing leaked out respecting them during that day or even the next morning. On Thursday afternoon both Houses met as usual. In the Commons Lord Hartington asked a question about the negotiations for a Congress, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer read Russia's reply of the 26th, and added, "This closes the Correspondence." There was then a rush of members to the House of Lords to hear whether Lord Derby had more information to give. In the Lords there was no sign of a crisis. Lord Derby walked in unnoticed just before the commencement of public

business, and took his seat, not on the Ministerial bench, but below the gangway. His position had only just been perceived and its meaning grasped by a large and now excited crowd on the steps of the throne, when he rose and said:—"My Lords, it is my duty to take the earliest opportunity of stating that I have ceased to hold the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, or to speak with more verbal accuracy, that my resignation of office has been tendered to and accepted by Her Majesty, and that I only continue to hold it till the appointment of a successor." He then briefly explained that measures had been resolved on, the nature of which he, of course, could not reveal, which he could not consider "as being prudent in the interests of European peace, or as being necessary for the safety of the country, or as being warranted by the state of matters abroad."* Lord Beaconsfield, with equal brevity, gave very graceful expression to the regret with which he parted from his colleague. "These wrenches of feeling," said the Prime Minister, "are among the most terrible trials of public life."† At the same time he announced the calling out of the Reserves, and left on the House the impression that this was the sole measure which had led to Lord Derby's retirement.

In the House of Commons on the 29th the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed this impression by saying that at the meeting on the 27th the Cabinet had resolved on the calling out of the Reserve of the

* Hansard, Vol. 239, cols. 100 and 101.

† Id., col. 104.

Army and Militia. "As soon as that resolution had been taken," said Sir Stafford Northcote, "my noble friend the Foreign Secretary dissented from it and tendered his resignation. Yesterday my noble friend announced that fact in the House of Lords, and it appeared necessary to the Prime Minister, and such was the feeling of all his colleagues, that in order to prevent any exaggerated opinion as to what might possibly have been the cause of that important step on the part of my noble friend, it was right and proper that he should state what the particular ground was upon which that step had been taken."* In this way Parliament and the public were misled. In this statement, as well as in that of Lord Beaconsfield, there was not only the suppression of what was true but the clear suggestion of that which was not true. Sir Stafford Northcote was under no obligation to tell the world all the grounds of Lord Derby's resignation, but he went out of his way to intimate that the calling out of the Reserves was "the particular ground upon which that step had been taken." So Parliament and the public understood these declarations; and so they believed for eleven days. But Lord Derby found it necessary to remove this false impression; and on the 8th of April he said in the House of Lords:—"I have been referred to by my noble friend at the head of the Government and by newspaper writers and others, as having resigned office in consequence of the calling out of the Reserves. Now I feel bound to tell your Lordships

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 251.

that whatever I may have thought of that step, it was not the sole, nor indeed the principal reason for the differences that unfortunately arose between my colleagues and myself. What the other reasons are I cannot divulge until the propositions of the Government from which I dissented are made known.”*

Lord Derby's resignation fell on Europe like a thunderbolt. It was universally regarded as indicating the triumph of the war party in the Cabinet. Lord Salisbury took Lord Derby's place as Foreign Secretary; Mr. Hardy, who was raised to the peerage in May with the title of Viscount Cranbrook, filled the post of Secretary for India, which Lord Salisbury had vacated; and Colonel Stanley, Lord Derby's brother, succeeded Mr. Hardy at the War Office. In these changes there was nothing to alarm the public. Lord Salisbury had been regarded as Lord Derby's ally in the Cabinet; and nobody knew as yet the difficulties in which he had been entangling the country during his administration at the India Office. His tone in public had always been peaceful. He had never made violent speeches like Mr. Hardy. He had even told the House of Lords of the Czar's "almost tormenting desire for peace" during the Conference. There was, however, no time to speculate on the results of Lord Salisbury's appointment to the Foreign Office. He was in haste to let it be seen how completely his attitude had changed. With the zeal of a new disciple he proclaimed to

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 789.

England and to Europe his conversion to the Prime Minister's views. His appointment as Foreign Minister was only announced to the House of Commons on the evening of the 1st of April, when Sir Stafford Northcote said that "just before the House met this evening, on communicating with my noble friend the Marquis of Salisbury who is about to undertake the charge of the Foreign Office, he expressed a wish to have a day or two in which to look into matters for himself, and to exercise his own judgment upon them." * This was said on Monday evening. On Tuesday morning the members of the House of Commons who had listened to this statement were astonished to find that the new Foreign Secretary had already exercised his judgment on all matters in dispute to such effect that a long and eloquent despatch bearing his name was published in the morning papers, with the statement that it had already been laid before Parliament. The printed copy of this despatch had been sent to the newspapers on Monday evening, and it must have been already in type at the Government printer's when Lord Salisbury told Sir Stafford Northcote of his desire "to have a day or two in which to look into matters for himself, and to exercise his own judgment upon them."

The Circular seemed meant to show that the Foreign Office had passed into other hands. It was not written in the usual language of diplomacy. It was addressed to Her Majesty's Embassies abroad, but it

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 298.

was intended to be read by Her Majesty's subjects at home. It began by reciting the diplomatic steps which had gradually led up to the conclusion announced in the last Russian despatch, that the Congress might discuss what parts of the Treaty it chose, but Russia reserved to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion. The Circular was an eloquent and outspoken vindication of the refusal of the Government to enter the Congress on such terms. "An inspection of the Treaty will sufficiently show," said the Circular, "that Her Majesty's Government could not, in a European Congress, accept any partial or fragmentary examination of its provisions. Every material stipulation which it contains involves a departure from the Treaty of 1856." The Circular was a forcible argument in defence of this proposition. It subjected the Treaty not to inspection but to dissection. It made no distinction between provisions to which the Government had already practically assented and those it intended to resist. It put forward with great skill the claims of the Greeks, and showed that the general effect of the Treaty would be "to increase the power of the Russian Empire in the countries and on the shores where a Greek population predominates, not only to the prejudice of that nation, but also of every country having interests in the east of the Mediterranean Sea." The compulsory alienation of Bessarabia from Roumania, the retention by Russia of the Armenian strongholds, and the cession of territory by Turkey in Kurdistan, were all objected to. Every consequence

of the Treaty was thus traversed, and the most serious results "upon the Greek population and on the balance of maritime power" were shown to arise "not so much from the language of any part of the Treaty as from the operation of the instrument as a whole." * Yet Lord Salisbury carefully guarded himself against putting forward these objections absolutely. He admitted that "large changes may, and no doubt will, be requisite in the Treaties by which South-Eastern Europe has hitherto been ruled." All he asked was that there should be full discussion and consideration of all the interests those Treaties affect.

This Circular had all the effect which was intended by its author. Prince Gortschakoff replied in detail to the criticisms on the Treaty of San Stefano, and in a Circular in which he communicated his reply to the other Powers he pointed out that "the Marquis of Salisbury tells us what the English Government does not wish, but says nothing of what it does wish. We think it would be useful if his Lordship would be good enough to make this latter point known, in order to promote an understanding of the situation." At home, the effect of Lord Salisbury's Circular was to separate him from all association with the peace party; and to make him the instant favourite and idol of those who for a whole year had denounced him. The Duke of Argyll points out† that "it was taken not for what it was, and for what it professed

* See Appendix to "Annual Register," 1878, No. 3.

† "Eastern Question," Vol. II. p. 125.

to be—an argument in favour of free discussion. It was taken to be the announcement of conclusions which were to supersede discussion, or at least to forestall it. It was taken to be the statement of objections which England would not only put forward but to which she would inflexibly adhere.” This mistake was a very natural one. It was the mistake of taking for a serious diplomatic document what was only a display of fireworks. It could easily be explained by a hint and a shrug of the shoulders to Count Schouvaloff; but it could not be explained to the public at home without destroying its effect. The Russian Government soon knew that England did not mean to raise all these objections to the Treaty of San Stefano; but the public at home did not know it for nine or ten weeks. They had been accustomed to diplomatic despatches intended only for the Governments to which they were addressed, and could not understand that this Circular of Lord Salisbury’s was intended chiefly for themselves.

The debate in the two Houses on the calling out of the Reserves went over the old ground to the old result. The Liberal leaders resolved not to divide against the Government; but Mr. Gladstone made a great speech, in which he criticized Lord Salisbury’s Circular, and pointed out its misstatements of the terms of the San Stefano Treaty, ending by urging the Government to go into the Congress. Sir Wilfrid Lawson insisted on dividing the House, but Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright were the only Liberals of Cabinet rank who supported him, and he was

defeated by 319 against 64. In the House of Lords there was no division; but the debate was made memorable by a speech from Lord Derby, in which he gave the reply already quoted to the misrepresentations of his late colleagues as to the causes of his resignation and asked, “If we are, I do not say drifting but rushing into war, what is it we are going to fight for? What is to be the result of the war, assuming it to be successful?”* To this question no answer was given except that the Government did not wish to go to war at all.

A week later a discussion arose in the House of Commons as to the Easter recess. The Government proposed that Parliament should take the unusual holiday of three weeks. Mr. Forster expressed the grave anxiety which was felt as to what the Government would do during a recess so much longer than usual, and Sir Stafford Northcote assured him that “nothing whatever has occurred which should give occasion for increased anxiety on this question, nor in any way diminish the hope we entertain of a satisfactory arrangement.”† Later in the evening Mr. Fawcett asked how it was appropriate that Parliament, having been called together in January because things were in a critical state, should take a holiday now that foreign affairs were in a condition still more critical. Sir Stafford Northcote replied in a most reassuring tone. “At this moment,” he said, “there is nothing in our policy at all different from that which we have repeatedly declared to the

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 798.

† Id., col. 1374.

House. There is no change in the views which we expressed in the debate which occurred only a week ago. . . . Nothing in the situation has altered for the worse since the time we last had to communicate with Parliament on the subject. . . . I can assure the House that we make this proposal with no concealed designs.”* On the very day after this speech was made, one of the concealed designs which had caused Lord Derby’s resignation was sprung upon the country. A telegram from Calcutta on the 17th of April announced that the Indian Government had received orders to despatch troops to the Mediterranean. This warlike step renewed all the apprehensions that Ministerial assurances had quieted. A great agitation once more sprang up, which the Ministers tried to quiet. Mr. Gathorne Hardy went down to Bradford on the 29th of April to open a Conservative club, and took the opportunity of declaring that “a war party—a war Minister—is an impossibility in this country,” and of assuring the public that “the Government have no desire to be the military gladiators of the world.” A day or two later Mr. Cross speaking at Preston, denied with indignation that the Government was preparing for war. Their steps were precautionary measures and not menaces nor threats. Speaking of Lord Salisbury’s Circular, he said that great alterations must be made in the Treaties of 1856 and 1871. “The object of Her Majesty’s Government is not the independence and not the integrity of the Ottoman

* Hansard, Vol. 239, cols. 1391 and 1392.

Empire," but solely the good government of its subject populations. He nevertheless spoke of war as quite within the range of possible events.

"I will not say that the Government intend war, for they declare they do not," wrote Mr. Gladstone on the same day to a Workmen's Peace Conference at Liverpool. "Some of their speeches are peaceful, but nine-tenths of their actions tend directly to produce war and have caused a belief all through Europe that they mean it. If peace is preserved we shall owe them no thanks for it; it will not be by their policy, but in spite of it. If they do not mean war, what do they mean?" Most Englishmen and all the politicians of Europe were asking this question. The Ministerial press answered that war was meant; and a great movement rose to prevent it. There were conferences in most of the large towns and meetings in the small places. An address to the Queen against war was influentially signed; and it was followed up by a National Declaration in the same sense, which received the adhesion of two hundred thousand persons including the chief men in every rank and profession apart from politics. The Government once more hesitated, and first modified and then changed its policy. The Indian troops were directed to Malta instead of Cyprus or Syria, the scheme of seizing Cyprus was given up, the landing on the coast of Syria was abandoned, and private negotiations were entered into with the Russian Government. During April and the early part of May Lord Salisbury was frequently closeted

with Count Schouvaloff, and before the middle of May that eminent diplomatist had gone to St. Petersburg as the bearer to his own Government of secret and special proposals from the Government of the Queen. The nature of these communications was kept secret, not only from the public at home, but from all the other Powers; but there was soon a feeling in the air that the risk of war had passed away.

Meanwhile the recess was over and Parliament was again at work. In the House of Commons Sir Stafford Northcote was at once put on his defence for the deceptive assurance with which he had sent the members home for the holidays. He wished to defer the discussion on the bringing over of the Indian troops till the Estimate was laid before the House, but Mr. Fawcett would not permit the delay, and partial explanations were forced from the Chancellor of the Exchequer before any other business was entered on. The House, he said, knew that the Government meant to take measures of precaution, and this was one of them. The movement of troops lay within the Queen's Prerogative; it was essential to maintain secrecy, and "the Government were not prepared for the matter becoming known so soon."* When the third reading of the Budget Bill came on Mr. Dillwyn moved the adjournment of the Debate, which Lord Hartington supported on the ground that "since the last discussion of the proposals of the Government, a fact—a most important fact—has come to the knowledge of the House. It has

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 1437.

certainly not been communicated to the House in any way, but it has come to the knowledge of the House.”* There was therefore a change in the whole circumstances under which the Budget had been discussed which the House ought to have an opportunity to consider. Mr. Newdegate supported this appeal, but it was defeated by 170 to 85. Mr. Hussey Vivian, who had sat in the House for twenty-five years and never yet moved its adjournment, now took that step, and Sir Stafford Northcote was obliged to yield. When the Bill came on again on the 13th of May Mr. Vivian pointed out how the country gentlemen had compelled Lord North to bring in a Bill of Indemnity for the parallel step of sending Hanoverian troops to Gibraltar and Port Mahon in 1775; and said that if the Vote in Supply were refused the Ministers might have to pay the cost of the expedition out of their own pockets. Mr. Newdegate joined in the protest. “It was his belief,” he said, “that the Government had acted not only unconstitutionally but illegally in importing these Indian troops into Malta, and taking them beyond the legitimate sphere of their proper operations, without the knowledge or consent of Parliament.”† The Budget Bill then passed, but it had meanwhile been arranged that a motion by Lord Hartington raising the question of the Indian troops should be discussed in the course of the succeeding week.

On the 20th of May there was consequently a double debate. Lord Selborne went carefully

* Hansard, Vol. 239, col. 1669.

† Id., col. 1758.

through the whole history of the constitutional control of Parliament over the military forces of the Crown, from the famous declaration in the Act of Settlement in 1689 down to Lord Salisbury's protest against looking upon India "as an English barrack in the Oriental seas from which we may draw any number of troops without paying for them," which he made in 1867, when he sat in the House of Commons as Lord Cranbourne. The Lord Chancellor replied, taunting his predecessor with "having taken two hours by the clock" in calling attention to the subject; and then giving what Lord Granville called "a very interesting sermon or lecture" himself, a good deal more than two hours long, on the motion which Lord Hartington was then submitting to the House of Commons. Lord Beaconsfield was more apologetic, the chief point of his speech being his reply to Lord Granville, who had expressed his reluctance to propose a Vote of Censure, "You will never be in a majority if your nerves are so delicate. You must assert your opinions without fear, and if they are just and true and right, you will ultimately be supported by the country."* In the House of Commons Lord Hartington moved a resolution asserting "that by the Constitution of this Realm no Forces may be raised or kept by the Crown, in time of Peace, without the consent of Parliament, within any part of the Dominions of the Crown, excepting only such Forces as may be actually serving within Her

* Hansard, Vol. 240, col. 252.

Majesty's Indian Possessions." The Government did not assert the contrary of this proposition. Sir M. Hicks-Beach proposed an amendment declaring that "the control of Parliament over the raising and employment of the Military Forces of the Crown is fully secured by the provisions of the law, and by the undoubted power of this House to grant or refuse Supplies." The debate went on for three nights. The Opposition made it a question of the constitutional control of Parliament over the forces to be employed by the Crown. The Government tried to narrow it to a mere question of confidence; and on that issue the division was taken, which gave them a majority of 121—347 against 226. On the vote of £350,000 for the Native Indian troops, and on that of £398,000 for their transport, the discussion flickered up again, but the votes were passed.

While these debates were going on the private negotiations between the British and Russian Governments were continued. The first troop-ships with Indian soldiers got to Malta on the 24th of May, two days after the arrival in London of Count Schouvaloff on his return from St. Petersburg. On the 23rd Count Schouvaloff had a long interview with Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office; and on the 24th and 25th of May there were protracted sittings of the Cabinet. On Monday the 27th the *Times* began its first leading article by saying, "From all quarters very favourable news continue to be received respecting the progress of the negotiations in the Eastern Question." The *Daily News* was even

more definite. Its first leading article opened with the statement that "There is good ground for confidence in the happy and peaceful issue of the negotiations between England and Russia . . . Subject to the chances and uncertainties of the future, it may be affirmed that the basis of an agreement has been arrived at." On the evening of the same day, Lord Salisbury in answer to a question by Lord Cardwell, and Sir Stafford Northcote in reply to Lord Hartington, informed Parliament that the prospects of a Congress had materially improved. They might have said a good deal more, for the whole controversy between England and Russia was even then as good as settled. The terms of a Secret Agreement had been approved, by which any show of conflict even at the Congress itself was to have a pre-arranged ending. The actual agreement was signed by Count Schouvaloff and Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office on the 30th of May. It was entitled "Project of a Memorandum determining the points upon which an understanding has been established between the Governments of Russia and Great Britain, and which will serve as a mutual engagement for the Russian and English Plenipotentiaries at the Congress." There was then a preamble expressing the desire of the two Governments to settle the Eastern Question peacefully, which was followed by eleven articles of the Agreement, and an annexed second Memorandum specifying the points on which the British representatives were to be free to urge their opinions on the Congress.

The first, second, and third of the articles of this Agreement referred to the new Bulgaria, which was to be kept from the Ægean, "according to the delimitation of the Bulgarian provinces proposed by the Conference at Constantinople." Non-Bulgarian populations were not to be included in it; and it was to be divided into two provinces, one north of the Balkans with political autonomy under a Prince, the other south of the Balkans, to "receive a large measure of administrative self-government, for instance, like that which exists in the English colonies." In the fourth article "Lord Salisbury accepts the retreat of the Turkish troops from Southern Bulgaria, but Russia will not object to what is enacted by the Congress respecting the mode and the cases where the Turkish troops would be allowed to enter the southern province to resist insurrection or invasion." England, however, reserved to herself the right to insist that the Sultan might canton troops on the frontier, and Russia reserved freedom to oppose it. By the sixth article the superior officers of the militia in Southern Bulgaria were to be named by the Porte with the consent of Europe. In the seventh article it was provided that the promises as to Armenia made in the Treaty of San Stefano "should not be made exclusively to Russia, but to England also." By the eighth article it was agreed that England and the other Powers as well as Russia should have a consulting voice "in the future organization of Epirus, Thessaly, and the other Christian Provinces resting under the dominion

of the Porte." The ninth article was a declaration by the Emperor of Russia that he never had the intention of converting the war indemnity into territorial annexations, and an understanding that the indemnity would not deprive the English Government of its rights as a creditor. The article concluded, "Without contesting the final decision which Russia will take with respect to the amount of the indemnity, England reserves to herself to point out to the Congress the serious objections which she sees to it." In the tenth article the Emperor consented to give back to the Turks the valley of Alashkerd and the town of Bayazid, on condition that the little territory of Khotour was restored by the Turks to Persia. The last article gave England's consent to the cession to Russia of the port of Batoum and the retrocession of the strip of Bessarabia. The duty of protecting the Ottoman Empire from further extensions of the Russian frontier was stated to rest on England, and the Emperor gave the assurance "that in the future the Russian frontier will be no more extended on the side of Turkey in Asia." The Memorandum concluded:—"Her Majesty's Government, being consequently of opinion that the modifications of the Treaty of San Stefano approved of in this Memorandum suffice to mitigate the objections they find in the Treaty in its actual form, engage themselves not to dispute the articles of the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano which are not modified by the ten preceding points, if after the articles have been duly discussed in Congress, Russia persists in main-

taining them. It may be that during the discussions in Congress the two Governments may find it preferable to introduce, of a common accord, fresh modifications which it would be impossible to foresee, but if the understanding respecting these new modifications be not established between the Russian and English Plenipotentiaries, the present Memorandum is destined to serve as a mutual engagement in Congress for the Plenipotentiaries of Russia and Great Britain." The Annex contained matters which the British representatives "reserve to themselves to point out to the Congress." These were the demand that Europe should participate in the organization of the two Bulgarian provinces; the limitation of the Russian occupation of Bulgaria; the name to be given to the Southern Province; the navigation of the Danube and the Bosphorus, in respect of which latter point "the Russian Plenipotentiary will insist at the Congress on the *status quo*"; and finally England promised to request the Sultan "to protect equally on Mount Athos, the monks of other nationalities."*

Peace being thus wisely secured in London, Lord Beaconsfield resolved to go in person and bring it back in triumph from Berlin. The agreement between England and Russia was to be kept secret, so that it might appear to the world in general, and to England in particular, that the Congress had brought about what the private interviews of Lord

* Appendix to "Annual Register," 1878, p. 245, under the incorrect heading of "The Secret Despatch."

Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff had arranged. The terms, however, leaked out. On the evening of the day on which the Secret Agreement had been signed, the *Globe* published a short outline of it, which nobody credited. On Saturday, the 1st of June, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily News* in Constantinople telegraphed that the Porte had received startling news, communicated confidentially, to the effect that England and Russia had agreed on terms which would reduce the sovereignty of the Sultan to a merely nominal rule. This news was published on Monday morning the 3rd of June, and simultaneously with it appeared telegrams from Paris, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, announcing that the invitations to the Congress would be sent out at once, and that it would meet very shortly at Berlin. It was also stated in the papers that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury would represent England, instead of Lord Lyons, whose name had been suggested and received with general favour. When the two Houses of Parliament met on Monday afternoon, the announcement was made by Lord Salisbury in the Lords, and by Sir Stafford Northcote in the Commons, that the Congress would meet, and that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury with Lord Odo Russell would represent England. In both Houses the Liberal leaders criticized severely the appointment of the Prime Minister as a Plenipotentiary, a step which Lord Beaconsfield at once admitted to be without precedent. When this short discussion was over, a striking incident occurred, the full significance of

which appeared only a fortnight later. Earl Grey put a question which was in everybody's mind. “I wish to ask the noble Marquis the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there is any truth in the statement which appeared in the *Globe* last Friday, as to the terms agreed upon between this country and Russia.” Lord Salisbury replied :—“The statement to which the noble Earl refers, and other statements that I have seen, are wholly unauthentic, and are not deserving of the confidence of your Lordships' House.” A burst of laughter from relieved Ministerialists followed this explicit assurance, and Lord Grey replied :—“I could not suppose that what was stated in regard to the retrocession of Bessarabia was true. It appeared to be too monstrous to be believed that Her Majesty's Government could have made such a stipulation as was alleged.”* This shows how Lord Grey understood Lord Salisbury. So the whole country and all Europe understood him. His words could have no other meaning ; and by their silence after Lord Grey's response he and his colleagues sanctioned the interpretation thus publicly given to them.

Lord Salisbury's was not the only effort made on the part of the Government to hide this Secret Agreement from the world. His disclaimer was accepted, and the chief discussions of the next week or two turned on the question of Lord Beaconsfield's appointment of himself as one of the Plenipotentiaries. On Thursday, the 6th of June, questions on

* Hansard, Vol. 240, col. 1061.

the Congress were asked by Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Forster, and Mr. Hayter, and Sir Stafford Northcote replied, first giving the names of some of the Plenipotentiaries, and then stating that the Government could not lay any papers on the table; "nor do I think," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "there is occasion for any formal statement of the policy of Her Majesty's Government beyond that which is contained in the various papers, which have, from time to time, been presented to Parliament. I would refer especially to the Circular Despatch of my noble friend (Lord Salisbury) with regard to the Treaty of San Stefano, which treaty will be the subject for discussion in the Congress. From that despatch, and from the statements which have, from time to time, been made in this House and elsewhere by Her Majesty's Government, its general views may, it seems to me, be sufficiently ascertained." * The views of the Government could no more be ascertained from the despatch of the 1st of April than their views as to the Malt Tax could be got from the declarations they had made before they came into office. The Secret Agreement had changed everything. The views of the Government could only be ascertained from that document, and to tell the House of Commons that those views could be "sufficiently ascertained" from the Circular which it had superseded was equivalent to saying that any mistake as to those views was "sufficient" for Parliament. The House, however, did not under-

* Hansard, Vol. 240, col. 1253.

stand Sir Stafford Northcote in this sense. It took his words in their natural meaning, and went off the next afternoon for a short Whitsuntide holiday, without any suspicion of the secret settlement to which England and Russia had already set their hands.

On Saturday, the 8th of June, Lord Beaconsfield departed for Berlin. No accessory was spared which could give dignity and importance to his mission. The platform at Charing Cross Station was covered with crimson cloth, a special train was run to Dover and a special steamer to Calais, and on the following Tuesday he entered Berlin. Lord Salisbury had meanwhile followed him almost unnoticed, and got there soon after his chief. The Congress began at once, Mr. Cross sending, in the name of the Cabinet, Instructions which had not been framed in accordance with the despatch of the 1st of April, but had been drawn up in view of the Secret Agreement of the 30th of May. The result of the Congress was thus assured beforehand. England had already yielded what Russia would insist upon, and Russia had given up what England would resist. There was to be the appearance of discussion, of yielding to argument or giving way to pressure or persistency, but the exact extent to which the pressure or the persistency was to go, and the precise point at which either side should yield, was as clearly defined as it is in a play. To England and to Europe, even to the other members of the Congress, it was to appear as though the Treaty was the actual outcome of a great diplomatic battle

fought out at the horseshoe table in the Radziwill Palace, whereas its main outlines had been already fixed in the Foreign Office in London some weeks before. The play was as well put upon the stage, as gorgeous and as admirably acted, as Mr. Irving's Shakespearean revivals. Lord Beaconsfield's splendour, his vast retinue, his costly dishes, his magnificent entertainments, and the lofty courtesy with which he walked the diplomatic stage, filled the continental papers with gossiping details which recalled the stories of legendary times. The play lasted exactly a month. The Congress sat for the first time on the 13th of June, and the Berlin Treaty was signed on the 13th of July.

The interest of the British public in the doings of the Congress was paralyzed by an event on which the Government had not reckoned. As an injudicious reviewer takes away the zest of a novel he recommends by revealing how the story ends, so the *Globe* had threatened to destroy the credit expected to be got from the Congress by telling its foregone conclusion. That danger had been boldly met. The authenticity of the outline published on the 30th of May had been denied, and the denial was believed. But Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield had only just sat down at the Congress when the news reached them that the Secret Agreement was revealed. On the 14th of June, the day after the first formal assembly of the Congress, and three days before its first business sitting, the *Globe* published the Secret Agreement in full. People at once remembered the

denials of a fortnight before, and on the very evening of this startling revelation, Mr. Walter James questioned Sir Stafford Northcote about it, having handed him a copy of the *Globe* a couple of minutes before. Sir Stafford Northcote had not had time to examine the document. He could only say that it had not in any way been communicated by the Government, but whether it was authentic or not he could not say till he had had time for examination. The Lords did not sit on that day, but as soon as they met on Monday, Lord Granville asked whether the Agreement, as published, was substantially correct, and especially "whether any further information will be given to the House with regard to that paragraph of the Memorandum which applies to the Protectorate of Asia Minor." The Duke of Richmond ignored this last part of the question, but said as to the Agreement, it "was evidently furnished to the journal in which it was published by some person who had access to papers which were confidential. So far as Her Majesty's Government are concerned, the publication of that document was totally unauthorised and therefore surreptitious; and as an explanation of the policy of the Government it is incomplete and therefore inaccurate."* In the Commons Lord Hartington asked a question precisely similar to that of Lord Granville, and received an answer identical with that of the Duke of Richmond. In the Lords, however, Lord Grey said that though "surreptitious and incomplete," it was not denied that, "so far as

* Hansard, Vol. 240, cols. 1569, 1570.

they go, they are an accurate account of transactions which have taken place, at least they contain the substance of a document which was drawn up and signed." But the Duke of Richmond at once replied, "In answer to the noble Earl, I have simply to state that I made no such admission."* The document as printed in the *Globe* afterwards proved to be complete and accurate in itself, and equally complete and accurate as an explanation of the policy of the Government. The Government admitted its authenticity by prosecuting Mr. Charles Marvin, a Foreign Office writer, for stealing it, when it was shown that he had given the first sketch from memory, and had afterwards literally and accurately copied the whole document. To copy is not to steal, and hence the case against Mr. Marvin broke down on the very day Lord Beaconsfield came home.

The story of the discussions in the Congress is told with great force by the Duke of Argyll in the twelfth Chapter of "The Eastern Question." The Berlin Treaty itself is a new edition of the Treaty of San Stefano with the modifications established by the Secret Agreement and a territorial addition to Austria. On the day on which it was signed Lord Salisbury sent a despatch to the Home Secretary reviewing the Treaty in the light of his Circular of the 1st of April; and pointing out what the English Plenipotentiaries had saved for the Sultan. The object of this despatch, which was immediately published, was to reply to those who were loudly complaining that

* Hansard, Vol. 240, cols. 1569, 1570.

Turkey had been partitioned. Lord Salisbury boasted that the partitioning had not gone so far as Russia originally intended. "Bulgaria," he said, "retains less than half the seaboard originally assigned to it"; and therefore "the new Slav State is no longer strong." He pleaded that "the retrocession of the district of Bayazid necessarily removes all apprehensions of any obstacle being interposed to arrest the European trade from Trebizonde to Persia"; and that rich and fruitful provinces had been restored to the Sultan's rule. He did not point out that all these arrangements had been made before the Congress met, nor that Southern Bulgaria had only been restored to Turkey in a very modified sense. The chief thing the Congress had done for it was to re-christen it by the name of Eastern Roumelia, in the hope, as expressed by our representatives, that the difference of name would keep two sections of a single nation from running, like severed drops, into one. Lord Salisbury passed over very lightly the practical transfer of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, and the consequent alienation from the Sultan of two rich and fruitful provinces, which the Treaty of San Stefano had preserved to his Empire. He spoke only of "the interposition of the Austrian Power between the two independent Slav States," and asserted "it withdraws from him no territory of strategical or financial value." The cession of Batoum was gently defended, the retrocession of Bessarabia was passed over in silence. Of betrayed Greece, nothing was said. The April Circular based much of its objection to the San

Stefano Treaty on the inclusion of a Greek population in a Slav State ; and the July Despatch boasted, not of the freeing of that population, but of its re-transfer to the Turks. The total result of the Treaty of Berlin, now that it can be looked back on from a distance, is seen to be the complete liberation of the whole Slav population of European Turkey ; and the continued enslavement of all its Greeks. The “ bag and baggage policy ” of Mr. Gladstone in 1876 was applied by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury to the Turkish officials in the whole of the Slav provinces in 1878. Even the great triumph of manning the Balkan forts with Turkish troops has been since abandoned ; and the bargain that they might enter into Eastern Roumelia cannot be carried out. The Greeks alone get nothing. They relied on the promises of Lord Beaconsfield’s Government, and have hitherto been disappointed, while the Slavs, who put their trust in the Russian armies, have got nearly all they asked for. Seven millions of people have passed from partial subjection to complete independence ; four millions more have come out of direct enslavement into merely nominal dependence. So effectually has Lord Beaconsfield carried out the policy again and again proclaimed of defending “ the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire.”

The Despatch which thus boldly claimed a striking failure as a remarkable success was vigorously followed up. Our Plenipotentiaries left the public no time for reflection. They had gone out with the Secret Agreement in their pockets ; it had been transformed into

a public Treaty, and they brought it back in triumph. Lord Salisbury's Despatch was dated on the 13th, the day the Treaty was signed, and on Monday the 15th he and Lord Beaconsfield returned. A great reception had been prepared for them, and popular enthusiasm once enkindled obliterated all recollection of the past. At Dover, where the two Plenipotentiaries landed in brilliant sunshine from an unruffled sea, Lord Beaconsfield assured the people that "he hoped he had returned bringing not only peace but honour, and not only honour, but renewed prosperity to the people." At the Charing Cross Railway Station there was a great gathering of Conservative public men on the platform, which was turned for the time into a flower garden; and the Plenipotentiaries stepped from the train in a shower of bouquets. At Whitehall, whither they were escorted by applauding crowds, the Premier came to the window and repeated the assurance, "Lord Salisbury and I have brought you back peace, I hope with honour." Lord Salisbury followed, with an appeal to the multitude always to support a Government which supports the honour of England." The cue thus given was taken up. All the Conservative papers and orators proclaimed that "peace with honour" had been got for England in the Congress of Berlin, and re-echoed the Premier's promise of renewed prosperity. The peace was soon broken, and the prosperity never came. But in the bright harvest sunshine which then seemed to promise a fruitful yield to the farmer, there was brief confirmation of Ministerial hopes. The reflecting few indeed

remembered that, if peace had ever been endangered, it was only by the men who had professed to save it; and that they had surreptitiously taken with them to Berlin the Peace which they now professed to have brought back with honour.

There was not much to satisfy the friends of Turkey when the gains and losses of two busy years came to be reckoned up. The Berlin Treaty has never restored the value of the Turkish Bonds. The Government, however, did what it could to compensate for its acquiescence in the partition of the Empire, the integrity and independence of which it had pledged itself to preserve. On Monday morning, the 8th of July, the daily paper which had been most devoted to Lord Beaconsfield and the Turks, startled the world by announcing the conclusion of an Anglo-Turkish Convention for the cession of Cyprus, and the defence of Asia Minor. Parliament, which had been once more passed over, knew nothing of the burden thus undertaken, and in the evening questions were asked in both Houses, in reply to which the Convention was produced and read. It then appeared that on the very day on which Russia signed the pledge, "that in the future the Russian frontier will be no more extended on the side of Asia," Lord Salisbury had instructed Mr. Layard to offer to the Turks, as the price of Cyprus, a defensive alliance "against any further encroachment by Russia upon Turkish territory in Asia." The Turks came into this Convention with reluctance. In the despatch proposing the terms of this

Convention, Lord Salisbury told the Turks that Russia would keep what she had got "in respect of Batoum and the fortresses north of the Araxes"; and after pointing out that in Asiatic Turkey "the government of the Ottoman dynasty is that of an ancient but still alien conqueror, resting more upon actual power than on the sympathies of common nationality," he proceeded to intimate that, "even if it be certain that Batoum and Ardahan and Kars will not become the base from which emissaries of intrigue will issue forth, to be followed in due time by invading armies, the mere retention of them by Russia will exercise a powerful influence in disintegrating the Asiatic dominion of the Porte." * Thus the possibility of Russian aggression was once more used to frighten the Turks; though on the day this was written Lord Salisbury had bought it off by consenting not to contest the possession of what Russia had already got. The Turks, therefore, consented to the Convention, which was signed on the 4th of June, in ignorance of a pledge, the existence of which made Lord Salisbury's offer of a defensive alliance, as the price of the surrender of Cyprus, in some degree parallel to that of an underwriter who should propose to insure a missing ship after his own private telegraph from the coast had brought him the intelligence that it had just been sighted. The first arrangements for the cession of Cyprus were, however, very grudgingly made by the Porte, and hence, even while the Congress was

* "Turkey," XXXVI. (1878), No. 1.

sitting, further negotiations were kept up, which resulted in the signing, on the 1st of July, of an Annex to the Convention, which provides that England shall pay to the Porte "whatever is the excess of revenue over the expenditure of the island," and concludes with the deceptive provision, "that, if Russia restores to Turkey Kars, and the other conquests made by her in Armenia during the last war, the island of Cyprus will be evacuated by England, and the Convention of June 4, 1878, will be at an end."* The Duke of Argyll points out that on the 29th of June it became apparent in the Congress "that Lord Salisbury had thrown over the cause of Greece. But this seems to have been about the very crisis of the negotiations with Turkey,"† and the dates suggest that our Plenipotentiaries gave up the annexation to Greece of Crete, Thessaly, and Epirus, in order to get firmer hold on Cyprus. Whether this was actually the case or not, it is quite certain that all the promises to Greece were broken, and M. Waddington's proposals on her behalf were rejected by the aid of the English Plenipotentiaries just at the time that they were getting for England this share in the Turkish spoil.

The acquisition of Cyprus was a popular step. The multitude always cheer when some new territorial burden is put upon their backs. Even the incalculable responsibilities of the Defensive Alliance suggested to some enthusiastic minds that a

* "Turkey," XXXVI. (1878), Inclosure in No. 3. Also "Annual Register," 1878, Appendix, p. 252.

† "Eastern Question," Vol. II. p. 174.

new Asiatic Empire was being conquered for England by Lord Beaconsfield's brilliant diplomacy. The publication of the Convention was admirably timed. The object of the Government in entering into it was not to multiply the responsibilities of the Empire, since it had taken such guarantee as was possible that the contingency the Defensive Alliance seemed to contemplate should not occur. It was a stroke of histrionic statesmanship, made to dazzle its supporters at home and to compensate for the disappointment which the Berlin Treaty was preparing for them. In this object it was completely successful. "While the Congress is occupied in finishing its work at Berlin," said the *Daily News* of the 11th of July, "it suddenly finds itself no longer the centre of European interest. Other issues with which it has no direct concern have suddenly been brought to the front, and negotiations which were opened amid a kind of breathless expectation and suspense seem likely to close in partial neglect. The announcement made in Parliament on Monday evening has been like the opportune turning of a kaleidoscope, or the shifting of a scene. It has brought another stage before us and other players." The Ministerial journals represented the Convention as a masterpiece of diplomacy, which won back for England all the influence in the East which the Russian successes had taken away. Fabulous accounts were published of the beauty of Cyprus and the undeveloped wealth of Asia Minor, where a new opening for British capital, British enterprise, and

even British emigration was proclaimed. Other voices indeed made themselves heard. Mr. Gladstone, speaking to the Southwark Liberal Association on the 21st of July, pointed out what, through the Ministers, England had undertaken. “You have undertaken to go two thousand miles from your own country, alone and single-handed, in order to prevent Russia from making war at any time upon Turkey in Asia. . . . Besides that, you have undertaken to see to the good government of what is, perhaps, the worst governed country in the whole world, namely, the entire mass of Turkey in Asia, from the Dardanelles down to the Persian Gulf, from the Mediterranean to the limits of Persia. And all this without your consent, without your knowledge, has been promised to be done at your expense. . . . There is but one epithet which I think fully describes a covenant of this kind. I think it is an insane covenant.” Mr. Forster, speaking at the Cobden Club dinner on the same day, spoke of it as “a tremendous change in policy.” He said “a perfectly new policy, as reckless, as wild, and as dangerous as it is new, has been embarked upon, and an attempt made irrevocably to commit the country to it without the slightest intimation to Parliament.” Mr. Fawcett re-echoed these words; and Lord Hartington, in the debate in the House of Commons on the 29th of July, said, “If that be not a policy rightly described, as it was described the other day, as an insane policy, I want to know what epithet is to be applied to it?” *

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 545.

The Parliamentary debates which followed the return of the Plenipotentiaries went over all this ground with minute detail and inevitable iteration. Lord Beaconsfield had a very brilliant audience when on the 18th of July he stood up in the House of Lords to explain the doings of the Congress. His tone was apologetic. His arguments were those of Lord Salisbury's despatch which had been published the day before. His boast was that "Turkey in Europe once more exists." He told Greece to be patient, justified the occupation of Cyprus "in the interests of our Indian Empire"; and declared the object of the Anglo-Turkish Convention to be the production of tranquillity and order. "Yielding to Russia what she has obtained," added Lord Beaconsfield, "we say, 'Thus far, and no farther.' Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England."* Lord Granville laughed at the pretence that the Ministers were the authors of the Berlin Treaty, and described in a sentence the attitude of the Ministry to Russia. Speaking of the Secret Agreement, he said:—"There is something like a chapter of a comedy in it! 'What about Bessarabia?' the noble Marquis might have asked. 'We want Bessarabia,' said Count Schouvaloff. 'We cannot give it you,' said the noble Marquis. 'But we must have it,' rejoined the Count. 'Well, if you must have it, you must, but for the sake of our honour and reputation we must make the strongest objection

* Hansard, Vol. 241, col. 1772.

to it in Congress, when the proposal is made.'”* The debate is chiefly memorable for the speech of Lord Derby, in which he said in reply to misrepresentations made as to why he quitted the Cabinet at the end of March:—“It was on account of the decision then taken—namely, that it was necessary to secure a naval station at the eastern part of the Mediterranean, and that for this purpose it was necessary to seize upon and occupy the island of Cyprus, together with a point on the Syrian coast. This was to be done by a secret naval expedition sent out from England, with or without the consent of the Sultan.”† Lord Salisbury replied with the utmost bitterness, comparing Lord Derby’s gradual revelations to those of “Dr. Oates when he brought forward successive fragments of his disclosure”; and denying Lord Derby’s veracity in terms which produced cries of “Order,” and appeals to Parliamentary usage, from Lord Derby, Lord Granville and Lord Selborne. Lord Derby afterwards replied that he had not trusted to memory in the matter but had made notes at the time. Nobody doubted Lord Derby’s word, and the sense in which Lord Salisbury contradicted him was not explained.

In the House of Commons there was a longer discussion. Lord Hartington moved five resolutions, expressing satisfaction that the Eastern troubles had terminated, and that liberty and self-government had been given to some of the Eastern populations, but regretting that the claims of Greece had not been

* Hansard, Vol. 241, col. 1777.

† Id., col. 1793.

dealt with, that the responsibilities of this country had been unnecessarily extended by the Anglo-Turkish Convention, without any means being indicated for fulfilling them; and "that such engagements have been entered into and responsibilities incurred without the previous knowledge of Parliament." Lord Hartington spoke with great vigour, and defended Mr. Gladstone from a vituperative attack which Lord Beaconsfield had made on him in a meeting at Knightsbridge a few days before. The debate was an outspoken one. The Ministers were apologetic; but underneath their apologies was a defiant sense of relief that the burden of this Eastern Question had at length been lifted off. Sir Charles Dilke, whose influence in the House has increased in every Session of the present Parliament, severely criticized the conduct of the Government in betraying Greece. Lord Sandon drew a millennial picture of the blessings England was about to confer on Asia Minor, and Asia Minor on England. The great speech of the debate was Mr. Gladstone's, who reviewed the whole course of the negotiations and showed how contrary the doings of the Government had been to honourable diplomatic precedents and recognized constitutional principles. He contrasted the great benefits got by Russia for the Slavs with the bitter disappointment our Plenipotentiaries had reserved for the Greeks, and pointed out that Turkey had been partitioned by those who professed to preserve her integrity and independence. On the fourth night of the debate

Sir William Harcourt, who made one of his most brilliant speeches, repeated a statement, which, he said, Sir Charles Dilke had made on the first night from information from persons of the highest credit and authority — “that in conversation before the meeting of the Congress, proposals more favourable to Greece than those which were ultimately brought forward in the Congress were made by France and Italy, and they failed in consequence of the opposition of Lord Beaconsfield.”* In his reply Sir Stafford Northcote said:—“I do not dispute the fact, but I say, holding the views Her Majesty’s Government and Representatives did, it was perfectly right.”† In the division which followed this really great debate the Government won a final Parliamentary triumph. Its majority was 143—338 to 195. Every Conservative in the House either voted or paired for the Government; but 31 Irish and 18 English Liberals stayed away unpaired; and 16 of the former and 5 of the latter swelled the Government majority.

Outside the House the triumph was continued. The division had taken place early in the morning on the 3rd of August, and in the afternoon Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury went in procession to the Guildhall to receive from a Conservative Lord Mayor the freedom of the City. The spectacle was most effectively arranged; there had been nothing like it since the reception of the Emperor of Russia in 1874. At the banquet in the evening, the great

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 1074.

† Id., col. 1105.

theme of all the Ministers was Peace. The Lord Mayor, in proposing their health, made their great claim to be that "they have been able, supported by the country, to continue to us the blessings of peace—a peace with honour." Lord Beaconsfield, in his reply, spoke of "the great experiment England was about to undertake" in Asia Minor, and Lord Salisbury enlarged on the "enormous responsibilities" which now lay upon the nation in regard to the East. But the main topic of both the Plenipotentiaries was that now the time was come when we could turn to domestic affairs. "My Lord," said Lord Beaconsfield, "I hope the time has come that, when I and my colleagues are sharing your hospitality, our conversation after dinner will be no longer of wars and rumours of wars. It has been my fate for several years on these occasions to offer a warning voice to my country, and I am happy, I would even say proud, to feel that time has proved that the warnings I offered were not without reason. But I trust that time has now passed, and that in the future it will be on the revival of trade, and the development of industry and the arts of civilization, that I shall have to address—periodically—the chief magistrate of the greatest city in the world." Lord Salisbury spoke in the same strain of peaceful anticipation. "At all events, it is a satisfaction to think that for good or for evil I hope that we have done with the Eastern Question in English politics. I never remember a question which has so deeply excited the English people, moved their passions so

thoroughly, and produced such profound divisions and such rancorous animosity. At all events, I hope that now, whether we have done wholly good or wholly evil, or something between the two, we are entering upon a gentler period of English politics." So said all the Ministers, and so in those smiling summer days the people hoped. The Reserves had been disbanded and the men sent home ; and though in the last days of the Session some heavy Supplementary Estimates came before the House of Commons, they were regarded as the last war charges this generation would have to endure, and the early days of the recess found the Ministers so confident of the happy future their labours had prepared, that instead of taking their well-earned rest, they set out on a mission in Lancashire, preaching the old Liberal doctrine and new Conservative gospel of Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.

CHAPTER XVII.

DOMESTIC POLITICS IN 1878.

THERE was not much that could be described as domestic politics in 1878. The year opened gloomily. One of the most prominent subjects in the papers was the distress in South Wales. The collapse of the iron trade and the great stagnation in the coal trade exhibited their worst results in that district, where it was reported that only twenty collieries in five hundred were working full time. Thanks to the efforts of Lord Aberdare and Mr. Henry Richard, effectual relief was sent to the distressed people, and Lord Aberdare was at length able to assure the public that "the bulk of our colliery population is able to maintain itself, although with difficulty and many privations." In other seats of the iron trade similar distress existed. At Sheffield there was greater privation among the iron workers than had been known for ten years; the workhouse had more able-bodied inmates than it ever had before, and in the great district of Brightside some two thousand cottage houses were empty. The Revenue Returns for the last quarter of the old year told a similar story. There was a falling off of £47,000 in the Customs and of £198,000 in the Excise, as compared

with the same quarter in 1876. This decline was only part of a steady downward movement which had begun with the financial year. The period which ended with April 1877 had been one in which the normal increase of about one per cent. per annum in the yield of the Customs and Excise had not accrued. The nine months of the next financial year, which had expired on the 1st of January, 1878, showed a decline of £160,000 in the Customs and £368,000 in the Excise. The trade depression had at length begun to tell on the spending power of the people.

There was no thought of anything but of the war in the East when Parliament met. Of thirteen paragraphs in the first part of the Queen's Speech, ten were devoted to Russia and the Porte, one merely contained the stereotyped statement that our relations with all Foreign Powers were friendly, and one announced that the Indian Famine was nearly at an end. The last paragraph had a significance which was not understood at the time even by the Ministers themselves. "The condition of native affairs in South Africa has of late caused me some anxiety, and has demanded the watchful attention of my Government. I have thought it expedient to reinforce my troops in that part of my Empire. I trust that a peaceable and satisfactory settlement of all differences may be shortly obtained." The outline of domestic legislation was brief. A Bill was promised "upon the subject of County Government," and the attention of Parliament was to be called to

the Consolidation of the Factory Acts and to the Summary Jurisdiction of Magistrates. A great fight was foreshadowed in the clause, "You will be asked at an early period of the Session to take into your consideration a Bill on the subject of Cattle Disease in this country." Scotch Roads and Bridges and Endowed Schools and Hospitals in Scotland were to be dealt with, as well as Intermediate Education and the Grand Jury Law in Ireland, which was once more described as "that country," instead of the phrase, "that part of the United Kingdom." "Among other measures for the amendment of the law" there was to be one for simplifying and expressing in one Act the whole Law and Procedure relating to Indictable Offences.

The first surprise of Parliament at finding that no great proposal about the Eastern War was to be put before it has been already described. The debate on the Address was an exchange of congratulations. These were followed up by a Home Rule amendment which, on division, met with but forty-eight supporters. Almost the first business of the Session was the Irish Sunday Closing Bill which stood for second reading on the 21st of January and passed that stage without a division. The Bill came on for Committee on the 14th of February, when it was reached by chance, and was met with four dilatory motions with divisions, and no progress was made. The same tactics were repeated on the 18th. Questions about it were asked several times in March, to one of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that "the

Bill was not the child of the Government, and what our duties to other people's children are is always a matter of delicacy." On the 1st of April Mr. Murphy met it with a motion to report progress, on which he spoke for two hours and forty minutes to a House of ten or a dozen members. Mr. Guildford Onslow followed with a speech of forty minutes, and Mr. O'Sullivan succeeded him with an oration two hours and three-quarters long. Nine divisions on alternate motions to report progress and that the Chairman leave the chair, succeeded to these portentous quagmires of words, in the course of which Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster appealed to the Government not to let this scandal continue. It was a quarter after six in the morning when the House adjourned. On the 4th of April the same course was continued, and the House was kept till a quarter after three in the morning of the 5th, without making any progress. On Monday the 13th of May there was another all night sitting. The House went into Committee after midnight, and when the whole of the small hours had been wasted in ten obstructive divisions it rose at half-past nine on Tuesday morning without having done anything. On the 16th the first clause was got through. The House was again in Committee on the Bill on the evenings of the 21st and 24th, and through the whole of the morning sitting on the 29th. Some progress was now being made and on the 30th the Bill passed through Committee, having undergone two changes, the one being the exclusion from its operation of Dublin,

Belfast, Cork, Waterford, and Limerick, the other being its limitation to five years. It was the 11th of July before the Bill was again reached, when the obstructive tactics were once more brought into use. Mr. McCarthy Downing, to the great amusement of a thin House, addressed a speech to the Chief Secretary for Ireland who was fast asleep on the Treasury bench oblivious alike of the lecture and the laughter. Mr. Lowther's nap was indicative of the whole attitude of the Government towards the Bill. Its supporters, however, struggled on, and soon after three in the morning of July the 12th the Bill got through the stage of Report, after five divisions. Difficulties then arose about the third reading. On the 1st of August the Chancellor of the Exchequer declined to find a day for the purpose. The Bill was counted out at a quarter before four in the morning of the 9th of August; but a special Saturday morning sitting was given it on the 10th, when it finally passed after a debate of three hours, by a division in which 63 were for the third reading and 22 against it. It ran through the House of Lords without opposition.

The first Government Bill was that of the Home Secretary for consolidating and amending the Factory and Workshops Acts. The measure had the cordial support of Mr. Mundella and Mr. Hibbert. Its chief object was to consolidate into a single measure some forty-five Acts which had been passed at different times, and which had made the law so complicated that Mr. Cross said "he defied any person who was not a lawyer—and he defied most lawyers—to say as

to any particular point what was absolutely the state of the law." The Bill was chiefly the work of the draftsman, to whose assistance Mr. Cross bore ungrudging testimony and "to whom," he said, "it was a labour of love." * The Bill underwent a good deal of amendment in details; and there was a slight extension of the definition of workshops so as to include what are called "domestic workshops." The Bill was read a third time in the House of Commons on the 29th of March, after a protest by Mr. Fawcett against the impediments it put in the way of the employment of women. It became law before Whitsuntide.

This Act was Mr. Cross's one legislative success during the Session. The Bishoprics Bill and the Truro Cathedral Chapter Bill, which he successfully piloted through the Commons, were sent down from the Lords. The Bishoprics Act provides for the establishment of four additional bishoprics in England; at Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Southwell in Nottinghamshire, and Wakefield respectively. These new sees are only to be founded when the Ecclesiastical Commissioners certify that the endowment fund will, with the aid from the contributory bishoprics, not ultimately be less than £3,500 a year. Neither of these bishoprics has yet been founded. The Truro Chapter Act provides for the foundation of a Dean and Chapter for the Bishopric of Truro, when there is an income of £1,000 a year for the Dean, and of £500 a year for a Canon. A Canonry in the

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 1482.

Cathedral Church of Exeter is to be transferred to Truro for this purpose.

Mr. Selater Booth introduced three Bills and attained the striking success of carrying one of them. He introduced the long promised County Government Bill on the 28th of January. "The Government," he said, "were of opinion that the time had come for constituting a new county authority, which would rectify grievances, discharge certain new duties, and guide and direct county policy."* The new authority was to be a County Board, to take over much of the administrative business of the Court of Quarter Sessions. It was to be composed of magistrates elected by the magistrates, and of representatives of the Poor Law Guardians. The magistrates were to elect two of their number for each petty sessional division, and the Guardians of such divisions were to meet once a year and elect two representatives to the Board. Towns with over 40,000 inhabitants which had no separate Quarter Sessions were to elect four members each by their Town Councils. The Bill was not liked, though Mr. Clare Read expressed great satisfaction with it, and especially with the indirect in place of direct representation of the ratepayers. On the second reading Mr. Stansfeld moved an amendment in favour of direct representation, and the simplification of the areas by making counties and unions conterminous. Lord Hartington favoured this view, but supported the second reading on the ground that the

* Hansard, Vol. 237, col. 586.

Government was disposed to improve the Bill, and it was carried by a majority of 168. The Bill got into Committee early in March, but the zeal of the Government had cooled and the Bill was quietly dropped in the middle of July. The Valuation of Property Bill met the same fate. Mr. Selater Booth introduced it this Session for the third time; it was read a second time early in June. On going into Committee, Mr. Clare Read met it with a resolution, affirming that no readjustment of the system of assessment would be complete or satisfactory to the ratepayers till a representative County Board was established, "with power of hearing appeals on questions of value, and for securing uniformity of assessment." After two evenings' debate, this amendment was defeated by a majority of 24—131 against 107, but Mr. Selater Booth again lost courage, and for the third year dropped the Bill. The Highways Bill was more successful. It was not liked by the county members, and some members for boroughs which have no Quarter Sessions, like Mr. Rylands, opposed it, as imposing on such towns large additional burdens. The Bill was described in the Queen's Speech at the end of the Session as amending the law as to highways "in a manner which cannot but improve their classification and management, and at the same time relieve inequalities in the burden of their maintenance."

The most interesting Government measure of the year bore the unattractive title of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. The object of this Bill was

to carry out the recommendations of the Cattle Plague Committee of the House of Commons, which had sat and reported in the previous year. So far as home cattle disease is concerned it was a stamping-out measure, which transferred the duty of dealing with the Cattle Plague from local authorities to the Privy Council; and empowered local authorities to apply the stamping-out process to pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth disease. Foreign animals, fat for the butcher, were to be slaughtered at the ports of debarkation; store cattle for the farms and fields were to be let in alive after quarantine. The Bill thus lay open to the charge that it was more adapted to keep out competition from the markets than to shut out contagion from the farms. Lord Ripon opposed it on the ground that it would raise the price of meat, but he was defeated, and the Bill went down to the Commons. By this time the large towns were aroused. The butchers declared that meat would soon be two shillings a pound, and even Conservative party discipline could not keep some Conservative members for great towns from rebellion. On the second reading Mr. Forster moved an amendment against making slaughter at the ports compulsory; but after four nights' debate it was defeated by a majority of 157—319 against 162. On going into Committee Mr. Torrens moved an amendment, which drew from Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson the concession that animals from Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, as well as America, should be exempted from the rule of compulsory slaughter unless the

Privy Council saw reason for applying it. In Committee the fight was kept up at every stage, and the further concession was wrung from the Government, at length, that the Privy Council should have power to relax the rule of slaughter of cattle at the ports, and to admit them alive when they were satisfied that the countries had a clean bill of health. Mr. Forster strove for some check on the action of the Privy Council, but was defeated. In the end, Mr. Chamberlain expressed himself satisfied with the results of the long struggle in Committee, and Mr. J. W. Barclay protested "against the surrender by the Government of nearly everything that was valuable in the Bill."

The promise in the Queen's Speech of a Bill to promote Intermediate Education in Ireland was kept before the Irish members for three-fourths of the Session before any effort was made to redeem it. The Bill was introduced in the Lords on the 21st of June, and went through without a division. In the Commons Mr. Gladstone described it as "a new boon conferred upon the people of Ireland in conformity with justice and right, and one which will tend more and more to attach them to the laws and institutions of the realm." * It hands over a million sterling from the Irish Church surplus to trustees, who have to give the yearly revenue to Intermediate schools in the shape of exhibitions and prizes to pupils, and result fees to the schools which train them. Mr. Fawcett moved in Committee to have the schools which

* Hansard, Vol. 241, col. 1506.

receive fees inspected, like the English Elementary schools, but was defeated. "The most noticeable fact in connection with the Bill," said the *Times* in its summary of the Session, "was the proof it afforded of a good understanding between the Government and the Home Rulers. This might have been otherwise inferred as well from the comparative quietude of the Obstructionists during the later part of the Session as from the vote upon Lord Hartington's recent resolution."*

The public were so busy about other things that nobody noticed the passing of a Bill "to consolidate the law relating to Weights and Measures." The Bill was considered by a Select Committee in the House of Commons and was regarded as what it professed to be, a mere consolidation of existing statutes. But in the work of consolidation the law got simplified, provisions which had long been obsolete got new life, and penalties which could not be enforced were made easy of exaction. In the autumn farmers and traders found out that the weights and measures they and their fathers had used had been illegal for a generation, and that after the 1st of January 1879 any informer could recover penalties for their use. Newspaper proprietors discovered that even the publication in a market list of the sale of corn by any illegal denomination of weight or measure, such as the "stone" of eight pounds instead of fourteen, would expose them to a penalty of ten shillings for each copy of the paper sold. Such a

* *Times*, August 16, 1878.

law is absurd. Its enforcement is impossible; and it has, in fact, been modified in action. It is a practical illustration of the dangers which may lurk in hasty measures of consolidation. The Criminal Code Bill, prepared by Sir James Stephen to simplify and express in one measure the whole law and procedure as to Indictable Offences, was read a second time and referred to a Royal Commission consisting of three eminent jurists. The prodigious Bill on Scotch Roads and Bridges got through in this Session; as did the Scotch Endowed Schools Bill. The Bill on the Irish Grand Jury Law failed; and the promised Summary Jurisdiction Bill did not reach a second reading. Of nine measures promised in the Queen's Speech, two which were for Scotland passed, of two which were for Ireland one became law, and of five which were for England only two were enacted and three failed.

Two important political measures were carried by private members. Sir Charles Dilke's persistency in asking for an extension of the hours of polling at elections was at length rewarded by the passing of an Act keeping open the ballot till eight o'clock in the evening in the London boroughs, instead of closing it at four. Another Bill with which his name had long been associated, was referred, together with a rival Bill of Mr. Marten's, to a Select Committee, and a compromise was reported to the House of Commons and passed, simplifying and improving the law under which the Registers of Parliamentary and Municipal Electors are formed in the boroughs of England and Wales. The Act throws on the

officials the duty of perfecting the electoral lists as far as possible, and facilitates the registration of lodger voters. The first registration under its provisions took place last year, and the new lists which nearly everywhere show greatly increased numbers of voters and are more completely purged than ever before of dead men's names and of people disqualified by removal elsewhere, came into operation on the 1st of January last. Another Act of the Session preserves the right of voting to occupiers who let their houses as furnished dwellings for not more than four months of the year.

There was more than the usual crop of unsuccessful Bills. The Duke of Richmond failed to pass a new Medical Act establishing a conjoint Examining Board for the Three Kingdoms and requiring a double qualification for every practitioner. The Attorney-General produced a Bankruptcy Bill but did not get it beyond the second reading; and a Bar Education Bill which was read a second time and then dropped. The Lord Chancellor proceeded to the same point with a Charitable Trusts Bill; and Sir Charles Adderley introduced a Merchant Seamen Bill, which came to nothing. Mr. Cross tried to legislate about Coroners but could not get on; his Bill for establishing an Under-Secretaryship for Scotland was dropped; and at the end of the Session the Lord Chancellor put on the table a vast Bill consolidating the Acts relating to Municipal Corporations, which still remains as a monument of useless labour. There were five Bills dealing with County Courts,

not one of which got far forward. Three Bills dealing with Scotch Hypothec were equally unlucky. Sir John Lubbock's Ancient Monuments Bill was withdrawn. Mr. Meldon, whose Resolution for assimilating the Irish Borough Franchise to that in England was defeated early in the Session by only eight votes, introduced a Bill at a later period, embodying the same principles, which was defeated by 228 to 197. The Bill for removing the Electoral Disabilities of Women was lost by a majority of eighty. The Colonial Marriages Bill was once more read a second time by a good majority; but had to be dropped. A Bill to abolish Capital Punishment was rejected by 263 to 64. The Permissive Liquor Bill received 84 votes to 278 against it. An Habitual Drunkards Bill was received with favour but was sacrificed for want of time; and a question of the immediate future was raised by the Real Estate Intestacy Bill, and settled by 193 against 157 in favour of a system which robs all the other children to make the eldest son a greater landowner. On the other hand, Mr. Mundella carried a very valuable measure for the better protection of freshwater fish; and Mr. Herschell succeeded in amending the Matrimonial Causes Acts in several points, one of which is that a wife whose husband is convicted of an aggravated assault may ask for an order from a magistrate "to have the force of a decree of judicial separation on the ground of cruelty." Sir John Lubbock succeeded with a measure which has organized Dental Practitioners into a recognized profes-

sion by providing for their examination and registration.

Three motions of a political character raised valuable discussions. Mr. Blennerhassett proposed a resolution in favour of proportionate representation, which he explained and defended in a speech of much ability and research; Mr. Courtney supported the principle of minority representation in one of the most successful speeches he has made. The debate however was counted out. Mr. Trevelyan's Resolutions in support of Household Franchise in the counties and the more equal distribution of electoral power got an evening in February, and after a striking debate in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer tried to oppose the motion without opposing its principle, it was defeated by 271 against 219. Mr. Osborne Morgan came much nearer success with his Burials Resolution. Thanks to Sir John Lubbock, he was able to move it on going into Committee of Supply on the 15th of February. The resolution was seconded by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen; and after a considerable debate, in which Mr. Bright and Lord Hartington spoke in favour of freedom of religious worship by the side of the grave, it was defeated by the narrow majority of 15—242 against 227.

A discussion which foreshadowed coming difficulties took place on a motion of Mr. Gladstone's at the end of July. In the middle of March telegrams from India announced that the Council at Calcutta had passed, at a single sitting, under the Viceroy's

assurance that it was "imperatively called for by that supreme law, the safety of the State," a measure suppressing the freedom of the vernacular press. The Act was one of the most hurried measures ever enacted. Lord Salisbury received on the 13th of March a telegraphic despatch from the Viceroy recommending this change; he took almost as little time to consider it as he did to study the Treaty of San Stefano, and telegraphed back his consent in time for the Act to be passed on the next day. The freedom of the native Indian press which had existed for forty years was thus swept away. The law was imitated, as many other things have been under Lord Beaconsfield, from the French Empire. The magistrate may require printers to enter into a bond not to publish anything "likely to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government, or antipathy between persons of different races, castes, religions, or sects." If a newspaper contains matter thought to come under this description it is to be warned for the first offence and confiscated for the second. A Government Censor is appointed, to whom articles may be submitted, and "no proceedings under the Act may be called into question by any court of civil or criminal jurisdiction." Mr. Gladstone brought the subject before Parliament on the 23rd of July by a motion asking that all proceedings under the Act be reported to the Secretary of State and laid before Parliament. Mr. Gorst supported the motion which he hoped would be adopted without a division. The Ministers made a feeble defence. Sir Stafford North-

cote promised, on behalf of Lord Salisbury, "to undertake that he will give the most careful instructions to the Government of India to keep him fully informed of all proceedings that they may think it necessary to take under this Act."* But in pursuance of the policy which regards Parliament as "the imperfect vicariate of what is called representative government," as Lord Beaconsfield called it in "Coningsby," the Government refused to give direct account of the prosecutions to Parliament. Mr. Gladstone therefore pushed his motion to a division, and was defeated by a majority of 56—208 to 152.

Two or three debates arose out of a new feature in our domestic politics. Mr. Gladstone's persistency in opposing the war party and his success in thwarting them, have made him the object of incessant personal attacks by the Ministers and their friends. On the 27th of August 1877 the *Daily Telegraph* printed a telegram from its Correspondent at Pera stating that important papers had just been published, showing that Mr. Gladstone had been trying to stir up the Greeks against Turkey by letters to M. Negroponte, a Greek merchant in Constantinople. Mr. Gladstone wrote stating that the information had greatly surprised him and asking for documents; but no notice was taken of his letter. M. Negroponte saw the *Telegraph's* despatch and telegraphed a complete denial. Mr. Gladstone then found a copy of his letter to M.

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 123.

Negroponte and published it, declaring at the same time that "there is some Polonius behind the curtain and I call upon him to come out." The *Daily Telegraph* noted these denials and said, "our Correspondent withdraws the statement which circumstances oblige him to leave unproven by documents," thus hinting that documents to prove it did exist. It was afterwards confessed by Mr. Layard that he had indirectly given the information to the Correspondent. Mr. Gladstone tried to get some explanations from Mr. Layard. In reply the Ambassador virtually charged him with suppressing other letters. Mr. Gladstone denied this further charge and again asked for proofs, but got no answer.* Two months passed, and then the Foreign Secretary telegraphed to Mr. Layard, "Are you preparing any answer to my despatch of the 22nd of November last, enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. Gladstone relative to the Negroponte correspondence, and if so when may it be expected?" The Ambassador replied, "I have not thought it necessary to continue my correspondence with Mr. Gladstone." He had in fact no excuse of any kind to urge. The matter was then brought before Parliament in a motion by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, censuring the Ambassador. The Government pleaded that Mr. Layard, by confessing to indiscretion and his regret for it, had apologized, though his injurious charges remained. Lord Hartington vigorously supported the motion, and on a division the Ayes were 132,

* Hansard, Vol. 238, col. 1165.

and the Noes 206, a majority of only 74 against a vote which would have cut short Mr. Layard's diplomatic career. In the House of Lords there was a conversation on Lord Beaconsfield's description of Mr. Gladstone as a "sophistical rhetorician," in the course of which the Prime Minister said that Mr. Gladstone had described him as a dangerous and even a devilish character, and had levelled the most offensive epithets at him for two years past.* Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Beaconsfield, asking what the epithets were, and when and where he had used them. Lord Beaconsfield curtly replied that he found the word devilish had been used by somebody else and that as to the others search should be made by the gentlemen who usually helped him in such matters. The search failed to substantiate Lord Beaconsfield's charge and his promised answer to Mr. Gladstone has never been given. Mr. Hanbury's proposal of a Vote of Censure on Mr. Gladstone for an article in *The Nineteenth Century* was never debated, but was laughed off the Order Book.

The Finance of the year, like its legislation, was based on the principle of not doing to-day what can be put off till to-morrow. The Revenue was satisfactory. The Customs had yielded £100,000 more than the Estimate, and the Excise only £36,000 less. Other items showed considerable gains. The total Revenue which had been reckoned in the Budget Estimate at £79,146,000 had reached £79,763,298, being an excess of Revenue over the Estimates of

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 488.

£617,298. Of this increase, the Chancellor of the Exchequer reckoned that £350,000 had accrued within a week or ten days of his Budget speech, owing to a rush to clear tea and spirits in anticipation of an addition to the duties. The Expenditure, apart from the Vote of Credit, had been £78,903,495, an increase on the Expenditure of the year before of £778,268. It has been usual to compare the Expenditure as actually incurred with the Estimate, but the Government has made this wholesome rule difficult of application. "In comparing the Expenditure last year with the Estimates, it is necessary," said Sir Stafford Northcote, "to decide what Estimates you should compare it with. There are three different periods at which the Estimates are made, the time when the Budget is brought in, the close of the Session when the Appropriation Act is passed, and the time when the last Supplementary Estimates are brought forward at the close of the Financial year." * This is true, not as a universal rule but as an account of the confusion introduced by the present Government in its fear to tell Parliament, all at once, how much it wants to spend. Parliament however had voted larger grants in 1877 than the Government used; and though the Expenditure exceeded the Budget Estimates by £109,000, it was less than the total grants by £765,479. Of the Vote of Credit, £3,500,000 had been spent; and this left a deficit of £2,640,000. The Government had issued Exchequer Bonds to the

* Hansard, Vol. 239, cols. 539, 540.

extent of £2,750,000, which they proposed to leave over to the future. "We thus commence the year 1878-79," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "with a debt of a temporary character of the amount of £2,750,000. There will be some other Expenditure which will be required for the Services for which the Vote of Credit was given."

Dismissing this floating debt to the future, and leaving further requirements under the Vote of Credit to be provided for in Supplementary Estimates, the Expenditure for the succeeding year contemplated in the Budget was fixed, in round figures, at £81,020,000, as against £78,903,495 in the previous year. To set against this vastly increased ordinary Expenditure, the Estimate of Revenue amounted only to £79,460,000; a deficiency of £1,560,000, apart from any Supplementary Estimates. To meet this deficiency it was proposed to increase the income-tax from threepence in the pound to fivepence; to add fourpence a pound to the duty on tobacco, and to raise the dog-tax from five shillings to seven-and-sixpence. A small allowance was made on the income-tax for depreciation of machinery; professional offices were put on the same footing as trade premises as regards the house-tax, paying sixpence instead of ninepence; and some relief from the dog-tax was given to shepherds. The increased taxation was estimated to raise £3,750,000. The total Estimate of Revenue was therefore £83,230,000; leaving a surplus over the estimated ordinary Expenditure of £2,210,324 to be

set against the deficiency caused by the Vote of Credit and the Supplementary Expenditure. Even these anticipations proved delusive. The Supplementary Estimates amounted to £1,845,000 for the Army; £678,000 "in respect of Extraordinary Naval and Transport Services"; £748,000 for bringing the Indian Troops to Europe; £75,000 for the Civil Service; a balance of £20,000 from the Abyssinian War; and £400,000 for the war in South Africa. This additional two millions was raised by the issue of more Exchequer Bonds, as a spendthrift settles his tradesmen's accounts by promises to pay, with interest, at a future time.

Probably some members of the Government still hoped, as spendthrifts do, that better times were near. They at least led the country to entertain the belief. Lord Beaconsfield's declaration that he hoped he had brought back prosperity along with peace, was caught up by his colleagues. A few days after Parliament rose, Mr. Cross, Lord Sandon, and Colonel Stanley went down to a banquet at Liverpool, where the liveliest congratulations were exchanged as to the new prospects of peace. Colonel Stanley, in returning thanks for the Army, said of the Eastern difficulties, "We happily can now talk of these matters somewhat more as things of the past, and we may look forward, we trust, to the time when arms throughout Europe may be put aside more than they have been during the last few months, and when we may turn once more with hope to that revival of trade which we look upon as the mainspring of our prosperity."

Mr. Cross said it was "the duty of the Government now to do everything that lies in their power to retrench the public expenditure so as to reduce taxation as early as they possibly can"; and speaking specially of the increase in the naval expenditure he said, "Every one connected with business and trade may rest assured of this, that now peace is secured and there is no danger of war the Ministry will do their utmost, not only to reduce it, but if possible, to remove it altogether." Later in the autumn the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking during a tour in the Midland counties, said:—"Our desire is, as far as possible, to develop the resources of the country, and to relieve and mitigate the sufferings which unfortunately must befall our people in times such as these through which we are now passing—times of great commercial depression. There is no doubt that this is a time of many unfortunate failures, that the commercial prosperity of the country has received, as I said just now, an unprecedentedly prolonged depression. We hope and trust that time may be passing over, and that we may soon have a revival of peace and prosperity; that we may have a greater industry and a greater commercial activity." Lord Sandon, at the same meeting, said, "We have known when was the proper season to spend; but on the other hand no one agrees more cordially than I do with the Home Secretary that we have now, when the time of danger is over, to show that we equally well know how to economise the resources of the country." This was the tone of all the Ministers.

Foreign difficulties were over, a peaceful policy would soon bring back prosperity, and then the country should see what a patriotic Ministry could do to lighten the public burdens, to carry forward again the arrested work of domestic legislation, and, in Sir Stafford Northcote's words, "to advance the social condition of the people, and in every possible way to knit together the various classes of which the nation is composed."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

THE hopes of peace and the anticipations of renewed prosperity which the Ministers and their friends kept before the country in the summer and the early autumn soon faded away. Parliament had not risen before peace was broken in the East. There was severe fighting in Herzegovina even while the ratifications of the Berlin Treaty were being exchanged, and the Austrian troops only succeeded in occupying Bosnia after a sanguinary fight with its Mahommedan population, equivalent in its costliness and severity to a conquest of the country. At Batoum the Lazes resisted the transfer of the port to Russia, and hoped to gain English help by hoisting our flag. In the Rhodope district of Turkey there was insurrection and anarchy. The Ministers in the meantime painted glowing pictures of the advantages which England and Asia Minor would reap from the flow of British capital and energy into the channels of primeval trade. "I would not limit my hopes," said the Prime Minister at the Mansion House banquet on the 3rd of August, "merely to the energy and enterprise of my countrymen, but I would welcome the ingenuity of Italy, I would welcome the inventions

of France, and I should rejoice if I saw those Powers profiting, and profiting greatly, from the operations which we were the first to conceive, which were first set on foot by the determination of England." Mr. Cross spoke at the Liverpool banquet in the same confident strain. They hoped, he said, by example and by precept to induce "not only English but European capital to flow into the country (Asiatic Turkey), in order that they may have the blessing, not only of freedom in every way, but also of trade and commerce such as we ourselves enjoy." The enthusiasm which first greeted the Berlin Treaty cooled nevertheless as quickly as it had heated, and none could be got up for the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Cyprus was found to be a pestilential island, useless as a place of arms and worthless as a naval station. On the last day of the Session Colonel Stanley expressed his inability to explain the discrepancy between the official returns and the circumstantial statements of the *Daily News* Correspondent, Mr. Archibald Forbes, as to the health of the troops. It soon appeared that there had been an official suppression of facts, because the illness was weakening and depressing but did not threaten fatal results. Later in the autumn Mr. W. H. Smith and Colonel Stanley went out to see the island for themselves.

While this process of disenchantment was going on new sources of anxiety appeared. Lord Beaconsfield had dwelt with especial emphasis, at the Mansion House banquet, on the friendliness of all the Great Powers. "I make no exception," he said, "with

regard to Russia. I believe there are no men more anxious to develop the resources of their country than the leading men of Russia. They have felt the conviction that a restless and warlike spirit is one which must debase and even ruin their empire." Immediately after this speech had been made, questions were asked in the House of Commons about a rumoured Mission of the Russians to Cabul and a corresponding Mission on the part of the Indian Government under Sir Neville Chamberlain. Sir Charles Dilke called the attention of the House of Commons to the subject on the 13th of August. He showed that there had been an agreement with Russia that Afghanistan should form a neutral zone, and "should not be a country in which Russia and England should intrigue against each other and should try to get the mastery. That was the understanding, and he wished it to be explained how it was that Sir Neville Chamberlain, accompanied by a large staff of officers and a whole regiment of Lancers, was about to be sent to Afghanistan on such a Mission—a Mission of such a character being very likely, in such a country, to lead to disturbances similar to those of 1840, if not indeed to a war with Russia."* Mr. Bourke in reply denied that Afghanistan could ever be regarded as a neutral zone. "The Government had heard that a Minister of Russia had reached Cabul, but they had no information as to what the Russian Minister had stated to the Ameer or as to what negotiations had taken place between them."

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 1928.

He further said that "our Mission to Cabul would not be of the character stated by the honourable Baronet, but it was such a Mission to the Ameer as the Government thought suitable to the occasion. . . . Her Majesty's Government were prepared to accept the responsibility with regard to any Mission they might send at this time to Cabul."* Sir William Harcourt and others followed up the subject, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, "While for some time it has been a matter of consideration whether there should be an English Envoy at Cabul, the idea has always been discouraged and nothing has been done in that direction, but now we hear that a Russian Mission has been sent there I think it is a most obviously necessary step that we should send one of corresponding weight and dignity."† Sir George Campbell pointed out that the Government had no information as to what Russia was doing in Central Asia. "But what disturbed him was that they had not at present been told that the Ameer had consented to receive the Mission. All they knew was that Lord Lytton had decided to press it upon the Ameer. All the Indian statesmen of experience had earnestly dissuaded Lord Lytton from that course. They had pointed out to him that the policy was dangerous under any circumstances, but that it was a still more dangerous and difficult task without the consent and contrary to the wishes of the Ameer to force that Mission upon him."‡ Mr. Fawcett joined in this

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 1933.

† Id., col. 1940.

‡ Id., col. 1941.

protest. "The question was one of the greatest possible importance. The wisest Indian statesman among them—Lord Lawrence—had warned them most solemnly against this step which the Government had now taken without giving any notice to the House of Commons."* On the 15th of August Mr. Fawcett asked whether the Council of India had been consulted before it was decided to send a Mission to the Ameer, and Sir Stafford Northcote answered that the matter was one which belonged to the Secretary of State alone. Sir Henry Havelock inquired whether the Mission was being sent at the request of the Ameer or with his consent; and Sir Stafford Northcote replied, "He did not invite it, but a communication will be made to him from the Indian Government proposing it." He concluded by saying, "We have never had a European agent at Cabul, nor have we asked for one."†

This was all the information Parliament could get. The Queen's Speech was silent on the subject, and Parliament dispersed not only in ignorance but with the assurance that no request had been made for a European Agent to reside at Cabul. On the 2nd of September a telegraphic letter from Calcutta, dated the day before, was published in the *Times* announcing that Sir Neville Chamberlain and his staff had arrived at Simla pending the receipt of an answer from the Ameer of Cabul to the Governor-General's letter asking him to receive a Mission. The native Envoy, Gholam Hussein Khan, bearing this letter, had started

* Hansard, Vol. 242, col. 1942.

† Id., col. 2017.

from Peshawur on the 30th of August. "It is also rumoured," said the Correspondent, "that although the terms offered to the Ameer are studiously kept secret by the Government at Simla, the Ameer will be required to admit a permanent Resident at Cabul, together with British agents in other parts of his territory." At the same time it was intimated by this semi-official Correspondent that "a clear, candid, and unmistakable declaration of the Government, backed by a large military force conspicuous for its state of complete preparedness and perfect fitness to commence a campaign at a moment's notice is almost sure to succeed." On the 10th of September another letter appeared, discussing new frontier lines and expressing the hope that by friendly negotiations some new defensive boundary might be adopted. Should the Ameer be hostile, "immediate steps will be taken to neutralize the effect of that hostility." A third letter appeared on the 16th of September beginning, "The Cabul Mission remains the one topic of universal interest. All other subjects have become dwarfed into insignificance in comparison with the paramount importance attached in India to the present momentous departure from the long-established principles of Indian foreign policy." The letter was an elaborate apology for the step. It described Sir Neville Chamberlain's Mission as amounting to about a thousand, including camp followers, and quoted a speech of the Ameer's delivered "some time ago," but how long ago was not stated, in which he declared he would hurl every rupee he had at the head of the British Govern-

ment, and "roll the Border tribes against them like blasts of fire."

These gradual revelations of the new policy excited the public mind at home and prepared it for what followed. The Native Envoy who had left Peshawur on the 30th of August was announced to have reached Cabul on the 10th of September, and was expected back about the 17th, but did not come. On the 20th it was announced that the "repeated delays" and the "discourteous tardiness" of the Ameer could be borne no longer and the Mission must start. Everything was ready, and Sir Neville Chamberlain set out from Peshawur on the 21st. When he reached Jumrood on the British frontier a halt was made, and Major Cavagnari, accompanied by Maharajah Pertaub Sing of Johpore and Sirdar Abdulla Khan of Tonk, rode on to Ali Musjid to ask for a safe passage. This was refused by the Commandant of the fort who had no orders to let an armed Mission through, and who, it was said, threatened to attack them if they attempted to proceed. The whole Mission then returned to Peshawur, and telegrams were sent off home and published in all the papers on Monday morning the 23rd of September, announcing the "insolent rebuff" and declaring that "all possibility of renewing friendly relations with this uncompromising barbarian is utterly hopeless; and even if the prospects were still hopeful their realization could only be accomplished at the complete sacrifice of proper self-respect, and at the grave risk of very considerable loss of prestige in the eyes

of our Indian subjects and of our feudatory princes." So said the *Times* Correspondent, and the Correspondents of all the other papers gave precisely the same colouring to the facts. It was universally believed in England at that time that the Ameer had flung an insolent defiance at the British Government ; it was even stated without contradiction that his officer at Ali Musjid had threatened to shoot Major Cavagnari ; and it was more than hinted that the Ameer's hostile attitude was due to the promptings of Russia.

This result of the Mission had been foreseen and provided for. Military preparations had already been quietly made for an invasion of Afghanistan, but they were now pushed forward with every possible accompaniment of publicity. For the first week or two everything but the need of avenging the barbarian insult was forgotten. The Berlin Treaty dropped out of public notice, and the din of warlike preparation almost drowned the Ministerial promises of peace. The anticipated revival of trade was checked by the fear that the collision with the Ameer would lead to war with Russia. Even Liberals like Mr. W. Cowper Temple took up the cry that the insult must be avenged. In the midst of this excitement it was announced that on the 27th of September the Native Envoy had reached Peshawur with the Ameer's answer to the Viceroy's letter, but the public were not told what the answer was. It mattered little enough, for war had been decided on and nothing that the Ameer could do would be permitted to avert his doom.

Early in October the home agitation cooled. There had been time for second thoughts, and the public began to understand what was being done in their name. Lord Lawrence wrote to the *Times* on the 27th of September a letter which that journal did not publish till the 2nd of October, pointing out the precipitancy of the Viceroy's doings, and asking "What are we to gain by going to war with the Ameer? Can we dethrone him without turning the mass of his countrymen against us? Can we follow the policy of 1838-39 without, in all probability, incurring similar results? If we succeed in driving Shere Ali out of Cabul, who can we put in his place? And how are we to ensure our own creature on the throne except by occupying the country? And when is such an occupation to terminate?" This letter was followed a week later by one from Earl Grey, pointing out that the Ameer's Commandant had no other course than to refuse to let the Mission pass till orders came from his master; that both the Viceroy and Sir Neville Chamberlain had treated the Ameer and his officer with great discourtesy, and that an independent ruler had a right to refuse to receive an armed Mission, if, as was not proved, the Ameer had done so. We could successfully invade Afghanistan, but, said Lord Grey, "the Anglo-Indian army would find that though it had no enemy able to stand against it in the field, it could command only so much of the territory as it could actually cover, while it would be able to draw from it little of revenue or supplies." Sir Charles Trevelyan urged

the British people to take the matter into their own hands, "for both the power and the responsibility rest with them, and the principal cost of an aggressive, ambitious policy would fall upon them." Sir Charles Trevelyan further said, "The last generation was frightened out of its self-possession by the mission of the unhappy Vicovich to Cabul, and Russian statesmen are no doubt laughing in their sleeves at having caught us in the same trap a second time." Months passed before the truth of this suggestion was proved, and it was found that the Russian Envoy had left Cabul in August, that he and his staff had been kept from all contact with the people of the capital, and that the Ameer had only received him with a reluctance as great as that which he showed to entertain the English Mission.

The quick rally of public opinion to the policy of peace gave the Government pause. Sir James Stephen backed up the Viceroy in a plea for a new frontier; and a long Minute of Sir Bartle Frere's, written in the same sense four years previously, was published. But it soon became known that the officer at Ali Musjid had never threatened to fire on Major Cavagnari; and that before the Mission advanced there had been messages from the Native Envoy, explaining and apologizing for the delay in the Ameer's answer to the Viceroy's letter. The public began to feel that they had been misled, and it was urged that the Ameer's reply delivered at Peshawur on the 27th of September should be published. Meanwhile the Envoy had gone back to Cabul with a

second letter demanding an apology for the refusal of a passage at Ali Musjid ; and at the middle of October it was announced that a reply had been received. This also was kept back from the public, but newspaper Correspondents were instructed to say that it was "the most impertinent communication addressed to the British Power since the days of Tippoo Saib."* The Home authorities knew better, though they allowed this account of the letter to mislead the public. Hence it was telegraphed on the 29th that "the decision of the Home authorities is not to take immediate offensive measures against Afghanistan but to address another communication to the Ameer setting forth in explicit terms the consequences of his refusal to admit a British Mission."† This resolution was most distasteful to the Indian Government, and two days after it had been announced the same Correspondent telegraphed that an Ultimatum had been sent, and added, "It is no secret that this resolution was forced on the Indian Government by the authorities at home, and only adopted after urgent and repeated remonstrances. It is regarded as a cruel and humiliating mistake from the highest to the lowest." A supplementary telegram despatched a few hours after this one declared that representations to the Home Government to reconsider its decision "were made with an earnestness seldom characterizing official communications, the Viceroy throwing all his personal weight into the scale." The emissary had

* Telegram from Simla in *Daily News*, October 23.

† Id., October 30.

been despatched on Monday with the Ultimatum, but had been told to stop at a point on the way to receive a final telegram which Lord Lytton hoped would be a despatch of recall. But the Home Government still persisted, and the telegram had to be sent bidding the Envoy go forward to Cabul, and, said the Correspondent, "the formal decision of the Viceregal Council was made to-day in full self-consciousness of bitter humiliation."*

This Ultimatum was delivered to the Commandant of the fort at Ali Musjid on the 2nd of November, and another copy was posted at Peshawur, addressed to the Ameer, on the same day. The answer was to be given by the 20th, and the Viceroy was empowered, in his own words, "to act on the 21st without further reference, in the event of no answer or an unfavourable answer being received, and only to refer for further instructions if the answer is of a character which seems to me to require this."† The Government knew what would be the result of leaving this discretion to Lord Lytton. They had before them when they made the arrangement the whining and humble messages which Lord Lytton had permitted to be described as more impertinent than any since the days of Tippoo Saib. Military preparations were consequently pushed on, and on the 9th of November Lord Beaconsfield electrified the Lord Mayor's guests and astonished England and Europe by declaring that the cause of the movements on the

* Telegram from Simla in *Daily News*, November 1.

† *Afghan Correspondence*, I. (1878), No. 71.

North-West border was not fear of invasion but the desire of a new frontier. “We have long arrived at an opinion,” he said, “that an invasion of our Empire by passing the mountains which form our North-Western frontier is one which we need not dread. But it is a fact that that frontier is a haphazard and not a scientific one, and it is possible that it is in the power of any foe so to embarrass and disturb our dominion that we should, under the circumstances, be obliged to maintain a great military force in that quarter, and consequently entail upon this country and upon India a greatly increased expenditure. . . . With these views we have taken such measures as we think will effect the object we require. When these arrangements are made—and I cannot suppose that any considerable time will elapse before they are consummated—our North-Western frontier will no longer be a source of anxiety to the English people. We shall live, I hope, on good terms with our immediate neighbours, and perhaps not on bad terms with some neighbours that are more remote.” The preparations for war went on apace. The Viceroy removed to Lahore, the army was advanced to Jumrood, the passes were reconnoitred, and a long manifesto addressed by Lord Cranbrook to the Viceroy was published in the papers at home. It was then reported from India that the Ameer had sent another insulting reply; and at daybreak on the 20th the army marched out from Jumrood to invade Afghanistan.

In the interval between the Premier’s speech and the declaration of war, an Afghan Committee had

been formed under the Chairmanship of Lord Lawrence, and a memorial to the Prime Minister asking for the immediate summoning of Parliament was very extensively and influentially signed. Lord Beaconsfield refused to receive a deputation to present this memorial, but promised the papers, and said that Parliament should meet if war was declared. The first volume of the *Afghan Correspondence* was published after a delay which Mr. Goschen declared to be inexplicable, but which is probably explained by the effect of the letters. Not even the revelation of the Secret Agreement with Russia more completely astounded the world. It was at once seen that there had been no repeated delays, no discourteous tardiness on the part of the Ameer, and no insulting repulse by his officer at Ali Musjid. On the 17th of September Sir Neville Chamberlain had telegraphed to the Viceroy that he had heard from the Native Envoy. The Envoy had seen the Ameer on the 12th, who had said, "I do not agree to the Mission coming in this way; and until my officers have received orders from me how can the Mission come? It is as if they wish to disgrace me." "Nawab adds," continued the despatch, "that the advance of the Mission should be held in abeyance, otherwise some harm will come." * On the 18th Sir Neville Chamberlain had again telegraphed, "Another letter received from Nawab Gholeim Hasan Khan, after an interview with Wazir Shah Muhammud, who assured Nawab on his oath that the Amir intimated that he would

* *Afghan Correspondence*, I. (1878), p. 241.

send for the Mission in order to clear up mutual misunderstandings, provided there was no attempt to force this Mission on him, without his consent being first granted according to usual custom, otherwise he would resist it, as coming in such a manner would be a slight to him . . . He believes that a personal interview with the British Mission will adjust misunderstandings." He had not invited the Russians, and when some who were ill had recovered he would send them away, "after which he will send a confidential messenger to escort the British Mission. He undertakes to be responsible for the safety of the Mission and its good treatment, if he invites it. . . . In two or three days he will send for the Nawab, and after consultation with him will fix a date and make all arrangements for the coming of the Mission."* On the 19th Sir Neville Chamberlain had telegraphed to the Viceroy that another letter had come in from the Envoy. "If Mission will await Amir's permission, everything will be arranged, God willing, in the best manner, and no room will be left for complaint in future."† The Envoy was of opinion that the Ameer was anxious to gain time. It is also clear that he was more anxious still to save his dignity.

The light thrown by these papers on succeeding events was no less striking. Major Cavagnari's Report of his advance to Ali Musjid and his reception there by the Ameer's Commandant was entirely at variance with the statements the Indian

* Afghan Correspondence, I. (1878), pp. 242, 243. † Id., p. 243.

Government caused to be telegraphed to England, and the Home Government permitted to be universally believed by the public. Major Cavagnari expressly states that the interview was a very friendly one. The officer, he says, behaved from first to last in a most courteous manner, and favourably impressed Colonel Jenkins and himself. He told them, says Major Cavagnari, "that if he had not been friendly disposed he would not have consented to the present interview, or have restrained his levies from firing on my party; that he had received no orders from the Amîr to let the Mission pass his post, and that without such orders he could not let it proceed; but that if the Mission would only wait for a few days he would communicate with Kabul and ask for orders." The discussion went on for some time. "I then asked the Khan for the last time, if I correctly understood him to say that if the British Mission advanced, as intended, on the following day, he would oppose it by force, and he replied that such would be the case. I then got up and shook Faiz Muhummad Khan by the hand, and assured him that I had no unfriendly feelings against him personally, and that I hoped to meet him again on some future occasion." * This is the official account of a reception which the Indian Government allowed to be described as violent and insulting, and even to be represented as a threat to fire on Major Cavagnari. This misrepresentation has been continued ever since. Mr. Gladstone, in a note to his speeches in Scotland,

* *Afghan Correspondence*, I. (1878), p. 249.

characterizes the statement of Lord John Manners in the debate on the Address, that the Mission was received "with violence and insult," as "grossly and absolutely untrue." In a letter dated from Belvoir Castle on the 12th of January 1880, Lord John Manners replies that "a reference to what occurred at Ali Musjid will be sufficient to establish the truth of that statement, to which I adhere." This letter was widely read; but not one in a million of those who saw it could make the "reference to what occurred at Ali Musjid." Lord John Manners could scarcely have done so himself. He must have written, as he spoke, under the impression which the earlier telegrams left. The very few who are able really to make "a reference to what occurred at Ali Musjid," as reported by Major Cavagnari himself, see at once that Mr. Gladstone is right, and that the statement to which Lord John Manners adheres is quite untrue.

Parliament met on the 5th of December, and the Queen's Speech merely described the object of its meeting. "The hostility towards my Indian Government manifested by the Ameer of Afghanistan, and the manner in which he repulsed my friendly Mission, left me no alternative but to make a peremptory demand for redress. This demand having been disregarded, I have directed an expedition to be sent into his territory, and I have taken the earliest opportunity of calling you together, and making to you the communication required by law." The time of the meeting of Parliament proved for-

tunate for the Government. In the afternoon a telegram from India was published announcing a brilliant victory by General Roberts; and a Government despatch to the same effect was read by Mr. E. Stanhope amid the loud cheers of the House of Commons before the debate on the Address began. In both Houses attention was at once fixed on the misleading statements which had first lulled Parliament to sleep, and then unduly excited public feeling. Lord Granville began by pointing out that "during the last three years not only has Parliament not been taken into confidence on the subject, but Parliament has actually been led to take a wrong view of what was the policy of the Cabinet." * He quoted Lord Salisbury's reply to Lord de Mauley in 1877,† and then an answer to the Duke of Argyll in the same year in which Lord Salisbury declared, "We have not tried to force an Envoy on the Ameer at Cabul," and, "Our relations with the Ameer of Cabul have undergone no material change since last year," though the Correspondence now just published showed distinctly that at that very time it was announced to the Ameer that it was intended to send Sir Lewis Pelly to Cabul. Lord Cranbrook followed with a vindication of his despatch, the historical inaccuracies of which had already led to much public discussion. Lord Cranbrook had said that the origin of the Ameer's ill-will was that in 1873 Lord Northbrook had desired to give him an assurance that "under certain conditions the Government of India

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 28.

† See Chap. XIV. p. 347.

would assist him to repel unprovoked aggressions. But Her Majesty's Government at home did not share his Highness's apprehension, and the Viceroy ultimately informed the Ameer that the discussion of the question would be best postponed to a more convenient season."* This statement was much paraded in the Ministerial papers. The *Pall Mall Gazette* based on it a charge that those who now opposed the war had made it needful. But it was entirely false. Lord Northbrook told the House of Lords that the Government of that day "justified me in giving the Ameer the precise assurances I desired to give him, and which I actually did give him through his Prime Minister, an authenticated copy of those assurances being forwarded to him personally."† The whole history of the war was, in Lord Northbrook's words, that "on the 15th of March 1877 the assurances that had been given to the Ameer—of protection in the event of an attack or of internal disturbance—by Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and myself, had been withdrawn under the instructions of the British Government, any expectation of support from us had been repudiated, and he had been told that we were under no engagement except the treaty of 1855."‡ Yet it was in these circumstances and with the despatch of the Viceroy announcing this change in his hand that Lord Salisbury said in the House of Lords only a month afterwards that our relations with the Ameer had not changed, and that the policy which

* Paragraph IX. of the Despatch. *Afghan Papers*, I. (1878), p. 262.

† Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 66.

‡ Id., col. 72.

was pursued now was that which had been adhered to for many years. Lord Northbrook said he was "perfectly astounded by the condition of things revealed by the despatch," when he found it in the Afghan Correspondence, and in the mildest Parliamentary language he told the House of Lords that "it would not be right, the question having been put, and the answer having been given, if I did not give my deliberate testimony that the statement then made by the noble marquis gave me a completely incorrect impression of what the real facts of the case were." *

The great debates on the whole policy of the war thus forced on the Ameer came on in the Lords on the resolution that the cost of the war should be imposed on the revenues of India, to which Lord Halifax moved an amendment. A second instalment of the Afghanistan Papers had been published, containing, not indeed the Viceroy's letters of the rudeness of which the Ameer complained, but the last reply of the Ameer, which had been represented as the most insolent answer since the days of Tippoo Saib. Lord Lawrence, who supported Lord Halifax in his amendment, pointed out that the exciting telegrams which were "still officially uncontradicted" had "contributed much to the anger of the English people against the Ameer;" and said of his last reply, "It is very difficult, in the absence of a copy of the exact expressions used by the Ameer in the original Per-

* Hansard, Vol. 243, cols. 72, 73. The question and answer may be found in Vol. 234, col. 1835, and the Viceroy's Despatch in Afghan Correspondence, I. (1878), pp. 160 to 172.

sian, to estimate fairly the importance to be placed on its contents ; and this difficulty is increased as we have neither of the four letters of the harshness of which the Ameer complains. However, taking the translation as it stands in the Correspondence, I declare as my deliberate opinion, that the words therein used do not amount to an insult. The Ameer was clearly angry and under great apprehensions when he wrote.”* Lord Derby pointed out the position in which Parliament was placed :—

“ We are discussing, and we know we are discussing, an issue over which we have no practical influence. When a war is begun, to withhold supplies which are necessary to carry it on and thereby to expose a British army in the field to disaster and defeat, is outside the limits of what is allowable or possible. We are therefore placed in this position—we are bound to support in action a policy which in opinion we may wholly disapprove.”† This was the feeling of many who regretted and disliked the war. It was the plea which Lord Beaconsfield urged in one of the ablest speeches he has delivered in the House of Lords. In winding up the debate on the second night the Premier surprised everybody by saying that he had never declared the rectification of the frontier to be the object of the war. “ It has been said that I stated on a recent occasion the object of the war to be a rectification of the frontier, the substitution of a scientific for a haphazard frontier. Now, in the first place, I never said that was the

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 269.

† Id., col. 274.

object of the war. I treated it as a possible consequence of the war, which was a very different thing ; my observations in another place were made rather with reference in my mind to certain wild ideas that were then prevalent, that it was the intention of the Government to conquer Afghanistan and annex it to our empire. I explained that that was not our object.”* The division gave the Government a majority of 136—201 against 65.

In the House of Commons there was a longer debate and a smaller Government majority at its close. The Government were at first indisposed to grant an opportunity for the discussion. But protests arose from their own side, the Opposition threatened to use all the forms of the House, and the Government had to yield. Mr. Whitbread eventually moved a resolution that “the House disapproves the conduct of Her Majesty’s Government, which has resulted in the war in Afghanistan.” He spoke with studied moderation, went carefully through the Correspondence, pointed out how Parliament and the public had been misled, and summed up the whole case of the Liberal party against the Government. “The charges I bring against them are that they have adopted a new policy in India ; that they have adopted that policy against the advice of all previous Viceroys, and against the advice of every officer of experience who has served in the Punjaub, and who is entitled to form an opinion upon it ; that they have acted on

* Hansard, Vol. 243, cols. 513, 514.

that policy, and attempted to carry it out by threats and by language unworthy of a British Government, calculated to defeat the very end they had in view, and to shake confidence in us in India; that they concealed this policy from Parliament and the country (and it was only by concealment that it could be carried out, for if we had had the whole story before us there is such a consensus of opinion among those who have served long in India that I would have defied them to do so); further, that having a case against the strong they fixed the quarrel on the weak, and that by their conduct they have brought us to a war in which already gallant men's lives have been lost and homes made desolate, to atone for the blunders and errors of their administration." *

On the lines thus laid down the debate mainly proceeded for four nights. Mr. E. Stanhope took up Mr. Whitbread's challenge, and repeated the implied charge which Sir Stafford Northcote unconditionally abandoned at the end of the debate, that the war was a legacy of the last Administration. Lord John Manners dwelt on the insult at Ali Musjid, but having the Afghan Papers in his hand, he declined to remove the indiarubber band which held them together, and spoke with scarcely a reference to them. Mr. Gladstone followed him with a searching analysis of the papers and a striking reference to the last disaster in Afghanistan. "There is still many a living being in Afghanistan whose memory bleeds

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 349.

at the recollection of the horrors we carried into their country, not yet forty years ago, and yet all this is to be done over again. May Heaven avert the omen which may next suggest itself. May Heaven avert the catastrophe which befel our army in 1841, and the sanguinary massacre which followed on that catastrophe." * Lord George Hamilton was charged with the duty of replying to this speech, which he did with all the freedom of irresponsible and impetuous youth.

Mr. Forster pointed out that on the 8th of August the Indian Secretary had declared to the Foreign Secretary that—"It is the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan rather than the Ameer Shere Ali, who with or without authority is at this moment pursuing a policy of which the effect must be to seriously agitate the minds of Her Majesty's subjects throughout India." † Mr. Forster showed that on the 19th of August Lord Salisbury asked Russia to withdraw the Cabul Mission, and on the 18th of September he received a reply that it was of a conditional nature and one of simple courtesy. "Have the Government," he asked, "accepted this explanation of Russia as satisfactory, if so, why did they make this reception of an Envoy one of their chief grounds of complaint against the Ameer?" ‡ Sir Charles Dilke quoted the same passage from the Central Asian Papers, said that Russia's reply to Lord Salisbury was a mocking one and that

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 569.

† Central Asia, I. (1878), p. 143

‡ Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 399.

“naturally dissatisfied with this reply, afraid to hit Russia, yet determined to hit somebody, our brave Government hit Shere Ali.”* Lord Hartington in a striking speech at the close of the debate, said: —“ Her Majesty’s Government seem to me to have no confidence in the strength of England or in the resources or energy of Englishmen. Like most men who are deficient in true courage they make great parade of their courage and their power. They bring over eight thousand Indian troops to Malta, and they leave it to be understood that behind them are the whole troops and resources of the Indian Empire. All this time that they are parading this demonstration of Indian troops, Russia is preparing, without ostentation and without anybody knowing anything about it, a trap which they felt quite certain Her Majesty’s Government would fall into, which Her Majesty’s Government have fallen into, and which has given occupation to the eight thousand Indian troops in Afghanistan.”† There is no longer any doubt that this is the true account of the Afghan quarrel. It is the avalanche which the noisy demonstration in the spring brought down. Sir Stafford Northcote in closing the debate once more made the question one of confidence in the Government. He admitted that former questions on the subject had been answered “with reserve.” He abandoned the charge that the quarrel had arisen out of the doings of Lord Northbrook. “We accept entirely,” he said, “the disclaimer by Lord Northbrook of the

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 603.

† Id., col. 828.

construction which we have put upon his part of the transaction." His reply to the question, Why not go to Russia? was "What would the people of India have known of your negotiations with St. Petersburg or Livadia, of all the notes passed, the explanations given, and the promises made, and the orders sent, and the delays which would have taken place in the reception of those orders and all the while the Russian Mission a fact, and received and made a great deal of in Afghanistan." * This was an excellent reason for sending a British Mission, a step to which nobody objected. But it was not a reason, even if the Russian Mission had been made much of as was afterwards found not to be the case, for the indecent haste in pushing on, and the gross misrepresentations of the Ameer's replies. No Government speaker touched this part of the subject. They justified the Mission to which nobody objected, but passed over in silence the violence and the premeditated determination to go to war which the Viceroy had shown, and which the Liberal party rebuked. On a division on what had practically become a question of confidence the Government got a majority of 101—328 against 227. On the further question of paying the cost out of the Indian Revenue, the votes were 235 against 125, a Government majority of 110.

When Parliament reassembled in February the war was apparently at an end. The Ameer had fled from his capital, General Stewart had occupied Can-

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 845.

dahar, and Lord Beaconsfield was able to say that the Government "have the satisfaction of feeling that the object of their interference in that country has been satisfactorily accomplished. We are now in possession of the three great highways which connect Afghanistan with India, and I hope that this country will remain in possession of those three great highways. We have secured the object for which the Expedition was undertaken, we have secured that frontier which I hope and believe will render our Indian Empire invulnerable, and we have attained that object in a manner which will trespass as little as possible upon the independence and self-government of Afghanistan." * This triumph was premature. Difficulties arose; the Ameer had disappeared, and it seemed as though the Government would have his country on its hands. At length the news of his death came, and Yakoob Khan became his legal successor. Yakoob soon showed that he would yield to the demands of the Indian Government, and early in May he presented himself at the British camp, which had been pushed forward to Gandamak, half way between Jellalabad and Cabul. Here negotiations were carried on which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Gandamak on the 25th of May. By this Treaty the Indian Government undertook to subsidize the Ameer with £60,000 a year, and the Ameer in his turn ceded the new frontier, and agreed to conduct his relations with foreign States in accordance with the advice and wishes of

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 1046.

the British Government. For this purpose a British Representative was to reside in Cabul. On these conditions the Ameer was to be supported against any foreign enemy with money, arms, or troops. The Government naturally exulted over this easy success, and in July cordial votes of thanks to the Viceroy and the Army were passed in both Houses; and these were followed up by a proposal of the Government to lend India a couple of millions to pay the expenses of the "brief but very brilliant campaign," as the Chancellor of the Exchequer called it, which had resulted in so satisfactory a peace. Mr. Fawcett proposed a resolution objecting to make India pay "seven times as much as will be contributed by England," and was defeated by a majority of only twelve—137 to 125.

On the last day of the Session, Mr. Grant Duff raised a short discussion on the Treaty. Mr. E. Stanhope, who followed him on the part of the Government, quoted some prophecies of failure and gaily laughed them to scorn. "He supposed no one would revert to the danger and the difficulty of placing an Envoy there that had been mentioned in December, for all these prognostications had been contradicted by subsequent facts. The Ameer had accepted a Resident, and had fixed his place of residence at Cabul, contrary to the expectations expressed at the time." . . . The Resident "was received with every demonstration of cordiality, and was able to move about the city with perfect freedom, and found that he was well received not only by the Ameer but

by the people.”* These boasts were taken up by the Government press. On the 6th of September, the *Saturday Review* printed on its front page, in its first leading article, a couple of columns in the same sense. “The courteous reception of Sir Louis Cavagnari at Cabul was to be expected. . . . The most inveterate of disputants would find it impossible to revive the interest which may once have been felt in the negotiations of Lord Northbrook or Lord Lytton. Demonstrations of the impossibility of procuring the admission of an English Envoy to Cabul have been answered by the actual Mission.” Before noon on this same Saturday morning a telegram was received, announcing that on Wednesday the 3rd there had been a rising in Cabul, and the Envoy and his suite had been massacred. On the evening of the same Saturday the Solicitor-General said in a speech at Launceston, that “he had no sympathy with the prophets of evil who prophesied that our forces were to be annihilated, and the force was inadequate to perform its duty. . . . The campaign had been carried out, and that successfully. He had just heard that an alarming telegram had been received, but he thought it would turn out nothing but a squabble, perhaps, amongst the native troops about their pay.” On the succeeding Monday the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed his belief that it was “an unpremeditated outbreak on the part of a certain portion of the mutinous regiments.” This was the theory to which the Government organs adhered,

* Hansard, Vol. 249, col. 1014.

and a well-supported statement that there had been threatenings of the storm before it broke was treated, as even the warnings of Lord Lawrence had been treated, as a party attack. Yet it was eventually proved that the movement was a well-planned scheme, that it was a national uprising which the wretched Ameer was unable to resist, and with which he had temporized to save his own life.

There was, of course, no difference of opinion among Englishmen as to the necessity of promptly avenging this treacherous massacre. The task proved no easy one. Terrible delays seemed to be interposed, and it was the second week in October before General Roberts entered Cabul. Of the movements of the army in this struggle and during the subsequent occupation of the city, the public at home have only had such information as was granted to the French under the Empire, or is given to Russians now. The first step of the Indian Government was to issue Press regulations, which excluded newspaper Correspondents from the army, and left the people at home dependent on official news. The operations in Afghanistan have consequently been carried on almost entirely in the dark. We have been supplied with Government information, and there has always been a suspicion that not all was told. There was some severe fighting, and when Cabul had been recaptured a terrible vengeance was taken on all who could be suspected of complicity in the September massacre. Early in December the Government journals began again to proclaim the complete success of Lord

Lytton's Afghan policy ; but they did so on the news Lord Lytton's agents sent. On the 11th of December the *Times* said in its first leading article, "there are no signs of any trouble, actual or in prospect, which can deserve to be termed dangerous. In this state of affairs political questions come naturally to the front and attract most attention. Afghanistan is a conquered country. It has offered no resistance worth speaking of and it is certain that it can offer none. We hold it with an overwhelming force, and can pass practically unimpeded from one end of it to another in whatever direction we may please." On the very day on which this boast was published a telegram was despatched from Cabul announcing a serious engagement with insurgents, "who are in considerable force about the city." A day or two later the public was told in a telegram from the Viceroy that, on the 12th General Roberts had decided to collect his force within the Sherpur cantonments, and there await the attack of the enemy. This was soon understood to mean that the British General had given up Cabul and retreated to the cantonments. A couple of weeks of great anxiety followed while reinforcements were being hurried up, and it was not till Christmas Eve that General Gough reached Sir F. Roberts and his troops. Cabul was again entered before the end of the year, and again the same congratulations on the crushing of the insurrection at one blow were addressed to the country. Yet on the 19th of January the *Times* published a telegram dated from Gandamak on the 16th, stating that "all the whole line of

country between the Kyber and Cabul may be described as being in an intensely expectant, not to say feverish, condition." The Correspondent adds, "the truth is, that after all the money and valuable lives devoted to the attainment of our objects in Afghanistan, between the capture of Ali Musjid and the present date, our hold on the country is represented in this quarter by little more than a strip of road one hundred miles long, ending however in the capital." Such is the present end of Ministerial boasting. Such is the foresight in virtue of which all the warnings of experience have been set at naught. Such are the statesmanship and the political prudence to which the election of 1874 committed the guardianship of our Indian Empire.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN TROUBLES.

IN dismissing the two Houses of Parliament for their autumn holidays in 1878, the Queen was made to say in the speech read by the Lord Chancellor, "Although the condition of affairs in South Africa still affords some ground for anxiety, I have learnt with satisfaction from the reports of my civil and military officers that the more serious disturbances which had arisen among the native population on the frontiers of the Cape Colony are now terminated." The Government was not well informed as to the condition of South Africa. Mr. Walter James had asked in June whether a rumour of the outbreak of a Zulu war was true, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach had answered that he had no information of such an outbreak, but that it was probable that some additional troops had been sent from the Cape to the Transvaal. These troops went in July, and Sir Bartle Frere in his speech to the Cape Town Parliament on the 2nd of August, expressed the hope that the reinforcements then on their way to the Transvaal would have the effect of restoring public tranquillity. It afterwards appeared that even then the troops were wanted rather for a war which had been resolved on than for any present

need. On the 12th of August, Commodore Sullivan wrote from Pietermaritzburg to the Secretary of the Admiralty, announcing that he had conveyed General Thesiger and his staff to Natal. In the letter he gave an account of what he had been able to learn as to the state of affairs in Natal. Having described certain causes of inquietude, he went on to say that he had intended to examine the mouth of the Tugela river both by land and sea, "also a reported landing-place situated about thirty miles eastward of the Tugela by sea," but before doing so he had thought it right to consult the Governor of Natal, who "considered it most unadvisable for a ship of war to appear off the coast, or that any action should be taken which might be construed as in any way implying a threatening movement, as such might throw a doubt on the good faith of England, whilst certain questions were still *sub judice*." The gallant Commodore consequently resolved to visit the mouth of the Tugela by land. He added: "As it appears to me extremely uncertain when active operations against Cetewayo will be taken, I shall, when I have finished the work I have already indicated, return to Simon's Bay and await events. Should hostilities arise, which I confess appear to me inevitable sooner or later, I am of opinion that a considerable addition will be required to the force now at the disposal of the General Commanding." He closed his letter by saying, "If it is not presumptuous for a naval officer to offer an opinion on a military question, I should say that three battalions of infantry and a battalion of

Field artillery seven-pounders would not be in excess of the requirements of the situation in addition to the force now in South Africa." *

This despatch was sent by the Admiralty to the Colonial Office on the 18th of September, and ought to have put the Colonial Secretary on his guard. On the 5th of October a letter from Sir Bartle Frere was received by Sir M. Hicks-Beach, dated the 10th of September, in which Commodore Sullivan's hint was followed up. It was pointed out in this despatch that while everything was settling down in Kaffraria and Cape Colony, there was a war fever "wherever Zulu influence is felt." There was, moreover, disaffection in the Transvaal, "which does not seem likely to be changed till the administration can be brought more completely into harmony with the mass of the population." This could not be done by any display of force, but it was essential to any measures of concession "that they should not be capable of being attributed to a sense of weakness, and their full effect will not be realized unless they are clearly the gifts of superior power." This argument led up to the request for more troops. But Sir Henry Bulwer stood in the way. General Thesiger was very reluctant "to ask for reinforcements on the Natal Border without the full concurrence of the Government of that Colony," and Sir Henry Bulwer "is especially anxious that nothing should be done in Natal which could possibly justify to the Zulu chief the belief that we were preparing for active hostilities against

* South African Correspondence (C. 2220), p. 136.

him." Sir Bartle Frere could not comprehend the grounds of Sir Henry Bulwer's objection, and felt quite confident "that the preservation or speedy restoration of peace will be rendered much more certain if General Thesiger had two more battalions of Her Majesty's army within his reach." "It is quite possible," added the High Commissioner, "that such reinforcements might avert or arrest a tedious and expensive war, and greatly conduce to the peaceful settlement of the Transvaal."* Four days later another letter arrived at the Colonial Office, in which the High Commissioner said "General Thesiger considers that an addition of two regiments would be essential, and that the presence of a cavalry regiment would be an enormous advantage." On the 11th of October came a telegram which had been sent off from Durban on the 23rd of September, "I find that the urgency of supporting General Thesiger's request conveyed in my telegram by last mail is much greater even than I supposed. I trust there will be no delay in complying with this request to its full extent."† Before the High Commissioner sent this last urgent message he had received a letter from Sir Henry Bulwer, telling him that "the recent arrival of additional troops both by sea and overland by way of Kokstadt, has been made the occasion of a great deal of loud and ill-advised talk in the Colony. It has been freely and openly said that the troops were come to fight the Zulus, and there can be no question that reports of this kind have been carried

* South African Corr. (C. 2220), pp. 232, 233.

† Id., pp. 254, 255.

to the Zulu king.”* These reports resulted in a hostile demonstration by the gathering of a number of Zulu troops for a hunt near the Tugela. Sir Henry Bulwer thereupon sent word to Cetewayo that this demonstration had created uneasiness in the Colony and that troops had been sent to Greytown and Verulam in consequence. The Zulu hunt was therefore abandoned.

All this information was in the hands of the Colonial Secretary before he replied to Sir Bartle Frere's urgent despatches. He consequently wrote on the 17th of October promising “the early despatch of some additional officers for special duty,” but refusing to send a reinforcement of troops. The Government thought “that by the exercise of prudence, and by meeting the Zulus in a spirit of forbearance and of reasonable compromise, it will be possible to avert the very serious evil of a war with Cetewayo.”† Nevertheless the Government was willing that the Imperial troops in South Africa, with the exception of a small garrison for Cape Town, should be moved to Natal and the Transvaal. Meanwhile Sir Bartle Frere had got to Pietermaritzburg on the 26th of September, and on the 30th had despatched a long letter to the Colonial Secretary full of alarms with which he confessed Sir Henry Bulwer did not sympathize. This long despatch reached the Colonial Office on the 1st of November, and was followed up by a further urgent demand in which Sir H. Bulwer was said to agree, and which was received on the

* South African Correspondence (C. 2220), p. 267. † Id., p. 273.

18th. To these despatches Sir M. Hicks-Beach replied on the 21st :—"The several circumstances which you have reported as tending to cause an open rupture do not appear in themselves to present any difficulties which are not capable of a peaceful solution." Nevertheless, on a review of all the circumstances and "influenced by the strong representations made by Lord Chelmsford as to the insufficiency of his present force to insure the safety of the European residents in Natal and the Transvaal," the Government had resolved to send out reinforcements. "But," said the Colonial Secretary, "in conveying to you the decision at which, in compliance with your urgent representations, Her Majesty's Government have arrived, it is my duty to impress upon you that in supplying these reinforcements it is the desire of Her Majesty's Government not to furnish means for a campaign of invasion and conquest, but to afford such protection as may be necessary at this juncture to the lives and property of Colonists." *

There is no reason for suspecting Sir M. Hicks-Beach of insincerity in giving this caution though his despatch was written in full knowledge of what was expected in the colony and implied that there was some cause for fear lest the reinforcements should be used for a campaign of invasion and conquest. Everything showed that this was the use to which Sir Bartle Frere and Lord Chelmsford intended them to be put. The High Commissioner had plenty of opportunities of picking a quarrel with the Zulu

* South African Correspondence (C. 2220), p. 320.

king, and he had been keeping them in reserve till these reinforcements were granted and he was ready for war. We had taken over with the Transvaal a boundary dispute which had been committed to four Commissioners to investigate. These Commissioners were the Attorney-General of Natal, the Secretary for Native Affairs, Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford, and Captain Jackson who acted as Secretary. They had given their report in June in favour of the Zulu claims. Sir Bartle Frere kept this report for more than five months without acting upon it, and it was far into December when his award was communicated to the Zulu king. The time had then come to pick a quarrel, and the delayed award was made the occasion for it. The just conclusions of the Commissioners were communicated to the Zulus, but were clogged with conditions which practically took back with the left hand what was ostentatiously given with the right. The award was accompanied, moreover, with an ultimatum which from that moment pushed all other questions out of the field. There is no need to describe this ultimatum. Mr. Chesson in a careful account of these doings speaks of it as "unmistakably a message of war."* Lord Blachford, in his excellent review of the causes of the Zulu war, says of it :—"The sentences in the presence of which everything else may be dismissed as mere surplusage are as follows :—'It is necessary that the Zulu army, as it is now, shall be disbanded and that they shall return to their homes. Let the obligation on every

* "The War in Zululand," p. 19.

man to come out for the defence of his country when it is needed remain, but until then let it be that every man shall live, if he pleases, quietly at his own home. Let him not be called out for war or for fighting, or for assembling in regiments, except with the permission of the Great Council assembled, and with the consent also of the British Government.' When I remember the number and nature of the army which Cetewayo had at his command when this demand was suddenly sprung upon him, I confess myself astonished at the composure with which it is made. To make the case our own, it is as if the Emperor of Germany in concluding with us a treaty of commerce, suddenly annexed a notice that he would make war on us in six weeks unless before the expiration of that time we burnt our navy." *

When Parliament met in December but little was known of all these proceedings. On the morning of the 16th a telegram from Capetown was published which stated that Sir Bartle Frere had sent an ultimatum to Cetewayo, and that the reply was daily expected. The Government not only knew nothing of this ultimatum but did not believe in its existence. On the afternoon of the day on which the telegram was published, Sir M. Hicks-Beach in reply to questions from Mr. Courtney and Mr. Whitweil, said that the state of our relations with the Zulus was "undoubtedly threatening," but he added, "not I hope quite of the nature which might be assumed

* *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1879, p. 573.

from the telegram." His last despatch from Sir Bartle Frere was dated November 19, and stated that Cetewayo had been asked "to summon his councillors, and to send proper persons to receive the award respecting the disputed territory and further communications regarding our future relations." The Colonial Secretary thought this must be what the telegram spoke of as an ultimatum, and he added:—"So far from bearing the character ordinarily attached to that term, I think there is good reason to hope that it may lead to a peaceful settlement of the questions at issue; but this, of course, greatly depends on the disposition of the Zulu King." Such was the ignorance of the Colonial Secretary of the doings of agents over whom he is supposed to rule, and for whom he is responsible to Parliament. It can be no wonder that under such weak and nerveless guidance the very next mention of the subject in Parliament should be the statements of Lord Beaconsfield in the Lords and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Commons, of a rash and reckless invasion and a disastrous calamity and defeat. In the middle of January the terms of Sir Bartle Frere's "communications regarding our future relations" were published in the papers, and it was found that the telegraphic description of them on which Sir M. Hicks-Beach had thrown doubt, was correct. Not only was the despatch an ultimatum, but was one which must lead to war. Lord Granville afterwards said of it, "no one can deny that it was nothing less than a declaration of war, for acceptance of it

was impossible.”* The Colonial Secretary made no public confession either of vexation or surprise. He boasted in his speech at Stroud a day or two after the terms of this ultimatum were revealed, that the Government policy was “to develop and call forth the interests of our African Colonies in a way which no previous Government thought it their duty to do!” In another week or two the war had actually begun, and Lord Chelmsford’s scheme of invasion by three lines of advance towards Ulundi was issued to the English public on the last day of January. It was further stated in a letter from that colony, that for months past the people of Natal had been reaping a golden harvest out of exorbitant payments for their cattle and wagons in conveying stores and ammunition to the Zulu frontier.

On Monday the 3rd of February the public was told that the Zulu war had begun, and that the Tugela had been crossed on the 12th of January without opposition from the Zulus. On the 7th it was announced that Colonel Pearson had got to Ekowe, and that Colonel Glyn had had a successful engagement. The next telegram came in the early morning of the 11th of February, and brought the news of the terrible defeat of this column of Colonel Glyn’s at Isandhlwana on the 22nd of January. The account of this disaster, a reverse without parallel in English history for fifty years, created the greatest consternation. The Prime Minister to whom it was at once communicated, summoned a hasty

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 1059.

meeting of the Cabinet, and all possible efforts were made to hurry reinforcements to the scene. It was soon felt that there was one bright spot in the gloom of defeat, in the splendid defence at Rorke's Drift, by which Major Bromhead and Major Chard had stemmed the tide of the Zulu victory, and kept the barbarian army from pouring into Natal. Further alarms followed. Colonel Pearson was shut up at Ekowe, forty miles from the border, and accounts of the defenceless condition of the Natal frontier gave grounds for the worst apprehensions as to the safety of the Colony. When Parliament met it was, as usual, too late for it to exert any influence on the war. The one thought to which all other considerations necessarily gave way, was the speedy reversal of the disaster which weakness at home and headlong impetuosity abroad had brought upon the British arms. Lord Chelmsford was bitterly blamed for his rashness, but he had his consolation. Colonel Stanley telegraphed at once a message from the Queen, expressing her sympathy with him in the loss of so many gallant officers and men, and "that Her Majesty places entire confidence in you and in the troops to maintain our honour and our good name." The Duke of Cambridge sent a similar message:—"Have heard by telegraph of events occurred. Grieved for 24th and others who have fallen victims. Fullest confidence in regiment, and am satisfied that you have done and will continue to do everything that is right. Strong reinforcements of all arms ordered to embark at once." These mes-

sages were not known to Parliament or the public at the time, and a loud cry naturally rose for the recall of both Sir Bartle Frere and Lord Chelmsford. The Government took a middle course. Sir M. Hicks-Beach wrote a vigorous rebuke to the High Commissioner, in succession to some mild remonstrances he had sent before the disaster, and Ministers expressed their regret that the ultimatum had not been sent home for approval before it was delivered to Cetewayo. They nevertheless stood by Lord Chelmsford and Sir Bartle Frere, and when on the 25th of March Lord Lansdowne proposed in the House of Lords a vote expressing regret that after the censure passed on the High Commissioner in the Colonial Secretary's despatch, "the conduct of affairs in South Africa should be retained in his hands;" they were supported by a majority of 95—Contents 61 Non-Contents 156—in refusing to recall him.

An identical motion was brought before the Commons by Sir Charles Dilke two days after the defeat of Lord Lansdowne's censure. On the second night of this discussion Sir Robert Peel made a striking statement. Having quoted the censures of the Colonial Secretary in the despatch of the 19th of March, he added:—"I am told that with that very despatch of censure there went out private letters from official and even higher sources, urging him in the strongest terms not to resign and not to accept the censure. I want to have a denial of that from the front bench. I believe, and I may

say I know, that when the letter of censure went out on the 19th of March letters were sent out not only by the Government but by many persons connected with the Government begging Sir Bartle Frere not to consider the censure, but to remain at his post, and to act as he would wish to act. The despatch of censure itself ended thus—‘But I have no desire to withdraw the confidence hitherto reposed in you.’”* Sir William Harcourt said that the speeches of Ministers in this debate were in complete contradiction to their censure. “What,” he would ask, “was the meaning of that language? It might, he thought, be conveyed in a well-known phrase, ‘Guilty, but do it again!’ It meant, Never mind the Parliamentary censure. We found an awkward Resolution put down on the Notice Paper by the member for Chelsea, and we were obliged to embody this censure in our despatch, but yours, nevertheless, are the right principles by which the Empire of England has grown—boldness, boldness, boldness—by all means let us have the courage which borders on rashness. The House would recollect the story of the battle of Navarino, when the King’s Government having occasion to notice it in their despatches as an untoward event, it was always supposed that another despatch had gone out from an illustrious quarter, in the laconic form, ‘Go it, Ned!’ Now so far as he understood it, it seemed to him that in this matter the Government while breathing censure in their despatches, really meant,

* Hansard, Vol. 244, cols. 2009, 2010.

‘Go it, Bartle!’”* Lord Hartington wound up the debate by an exhaustive review of the whole history of the war, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer fell back on the plea that “if the House is not satisfied with the principles on which Her Majesty’s Government have conducted our colonial policy, it is right in displacing us.”† The division gave the Government a majority of 60—306 against the censure and 246 for it.

Meanwhile the war had languished, and ten days after the Parliamentary division came the story of another disaster. A force of seventy men guarding a convoy of twenty waggons on the Itombe river was surprised and cut to pieces. A little later a severe attack on Colonel Wood’s camp was only repulsed with terrible loss. Colonel Pearson was all this time shut up at Ekowe, and it was not till the 21st of April that Ministers were able to announce to Parliament the satisfactory news of his relief and retreat. All through May the mails from South Africa were looked for with increasing anxiety. They brought little news but that of fresh disasters or increased alarms. Plans for renewing the invasion were announced and then found to be impracticable; difficulties of transport, the discouragement of the troops and sickness and suffering among them, were the chief burden of the despatches which appeared in the newspapers. At length on the 26th of May, the day on which it was announced that Major Cavagnari had signed the Treaty of Gandamak with the Ameer, the Govern-

* Hansard, Vol. 245, cols. 86, 87.

† *Id.*, col. 123.

ment told both Houses of Parliament that Sir Garnet Wolseley would be sent out "to be Governor of Natal and the Transvaal, and to be High Commissioner and Commander-in-chief in those Colonies, and in the lands adjacent, north and east of those colonies in South Africa." Both Houses were at the same time reminded that "the distance between the seat of Sir Bartle Frere's authority and the seat of war is upwards of a thousand miles." The announcement was received with universal satisfaction and relief. Sir Garnet Wolseley was speedily on his way, and the notification of his appointment quickened Lord Chelmsford to unwonted activity. Cetewayo asked for peace, but no notice was taken of his request and at all risks a push was made for his capital. Sir Garnet Wolseley got to Cape Town on the day before Midsummer Day and at once set out for Natal. Meanwhile the news had come that the young Prince Louis Napoleon who had joined the army as a volunteer to see something of warfare, had been caught in an ambush and slain. The event tended to intensify the dissatisfaction felt with Lord Chelmsford's arrangements. His advance however was pushed on, and when Sir Garnet Wolseley got to Durban at the end of June the army was almost within sight of Ulundi. A curious accident gave Lord Chelmsford a final chance. On the 30th of June Sir Garnet Wolseley telegraphed home, "Have placed Lord Chelmsford in command of second division till I can reach him." Next day he embarked at Durban for Port Durnford, meaning to land there

and hasten up to the front, meeting Lord Chelmsford's force at Magnibonium on its way to Ulundi. He had arranged to receive Cetewayo's messengers there to discuss with them terms of peace. But at Port Durnford the surf prevented his landing, and he had to steam back to Durban and get round by land. He arrived at Durban on the 4th, only to hear that the fighting was over. While he was tossing on the sea Lord Chelmsford had pushed on, had fought the victorious battle of Ulundi on the 3rd of July burned the king's kraal and closed the war.

The news of this victory was carried to Sir Garnet Wolseley by Mr. Forbes, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily News*. His ride of fifteen hours all through the night to carry this intelligence is one of the most striking efforts of energy and endurance in modern times. The telegram from Sir Bartle Frere announcing this victory, which was read in both Houses of Parliament on the 23rd of July, ended by saying that he had as yet "received from Sir Garnet Wolseley only the copy of Forbes's telegram, which had reached me previously." There is no need to tell the story here of the effusive rejoicings which met Lord Chelmsford and Sir Evelyn Wood on their arrival home. Those rejoicings were rather the expression of national satisfaction that the war was over than boastings over the subjugation of a mere savage tribe. They were the natural revulsion from the suspense of anxious months, in which a sense of possible disaster was intensified by a conviction, which not even the Government could help confessing,

of the needlessness and wickedness of the war. To Sir Garnet Wolseley there was only left to hunt the fugitive king and partition and resettle his country. Cetewayo was caught on the 28th of August and sent as a State prisoner to Cape Colony, where he has been held in captivity ever since. The country has been partitioned between thirteen chiefs with a British Resident to control them. Two lesser frontier quarrels have since been settled. Moirosi the chief of the insurgent Basutos has been killed by the Colonial forces in the storming of his kraal; and Secocoeni's stronghold has been destroyed by Sir Garnet Wolseley and the chief himself taken prisoner.

These events have not given rest to South Africa. The weakness of the Colonial Office, and the want of settled policy by the Government, have raised difficulties in the Transvaal out of which there seems at present to be no escape. When Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the South African Republic, it was on distinct assurances sent home to Lord Carnarvon that the change was desired by the great majority of the people. It was soon seen that the evidence of this desire was delusive. Sir Theophilus Shepstone tried to make the destruction of their independence palatable to the people by promising them the full retention of their self-governing powers, the continuation of their courts of justice, the perpetuation and enforcement of their existing laws, and that security and protection they had failed to obtain for themselves. None of these promises

were kept. A deputation from the Boers came over to England in the autumn after the annexation to protest against it. Lord Carnarvon told them that he believed the majority of the inhabitants were favourable to the annexation, and they went back home with the message. On their arrival a memorial to the Home Government was got up which soon received the signatures of 6,591 adult white men out of the 8,000 in the country. Sir Theophilus Shepstone issued a proclamation denouncing as traitors the men who had caused this petition to be got up. The delegates were nevertheless sent back to England with the memorial, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach replied by letter. In his speech on the 16th of August 1878, in reply to Mr. Courtney who had brought the subject before the House, the Colonial Secretary read a passage from this letter in which he declared that "It is the desire of Her Majesty's Government that no time shall be lost in carrying out the promises given in the Proclamation, so as to satisfy the wishes of those who deprecate any avoidable departure from the old constitution of the country." Having read this pledge which he had given to the Boers, Sir M. Hicks-Beach proceeded to repeat it to Parliament. It was necessary to keep control over native policy, "but saving Imperial Questions," said the Colonial Secretary, "I am as anxious as the honourable gentleman can be that the people of the Transvaal shall manage their own affairs. I will devote—indeed I have already devoted—much serious consideration to the manner in which

that may best be done." He had told Sir Bartle Frere to go and consult with Sir T. Shepstone and form a scheme for this purpose. The Delegates would find if they co-operated with the Government "that, subject to the points which I have named, it is our great anxiety to deal with them and with their country so as to give them, as fully as possible, that self-government which they desire." *

The "much serious consideration" and "great anxiety" had no results. Sir Bartle Frere was too busy at the end of the year in getting up the Zulu war to look after the Transvaal, and he did not go there till March when the attitude of the Boers after the Zulu victories was creating anxiety. When he arrived at Pretoria he found the Boers in a laagered camp. They consisted, as he reported to Lord Chelmsford, of "from 1,600 to 2,200 men well armed and most of them mounted, all well accustomed to guerilla warfare with natives in the open veldt, and so posted that without artillery and cavalry it would have been a bold man who would have undertaken to disperse them with a force six times as large as that at the disposal of Colonel Rowlands,"† the Commandant in the Transvaal. There were fears at home that they might seize the High Commissioner and hold him as the hostage of their freedom. The High Commissioner parleyed with them and temporized. He and Colonel Lanyon, the Administrator, had frequent meetings with a Committee of the malcontents, and

* Hansard, Vol. 242, cols. 2080, 2081.

† South Africa (C. 2454), p. 45.

the result of these communications was that the Boers broke up their camp and went home. The Boers believed they had made an influential convert. They had drawn up a memorial asking for the restoration of their independence, and Sir Bartle Frere had agreed to send it home with a despatch recommending it to the serious attention of the Home Government. In this despatch he said :—" Looking to the bearing and the temper of the members of the Committee whom I met, who are men of position in the country and respected, and leaders who have from the earliest establishment of the Republic taken a prominent part in the Government of the country, I think I may say that their representations are worthy of your earnest consideration." *

This despatch was shown to some members of the Boers' Committee, who naturally believed it would result in the restoration of the independence of their Republic. A few months later Sir Garnet Wolseley made his appearance in the Transvaal with a good deal more force at his back, and a good deal more resolution in his tone. The Boers had become impatient. They were not paying the taxes, they were resisting the law, and some of their leaders had refused to take the oath of allegiance which was tendered to them. Sir Garnet Wolseley at once declared the annexation to be irrevocable, and followed up the declaration by informing the people that the Government of the colony would be carried on by persons nominated by the Crown. All representative institu-

* South Africa (C. 2367), p. 83.

tions are thus swept away, and a people who resigned their independence on the pledge again and again repeated that they should still have all their own laws and institutions, have seen them all overturned. Self-government no longer exists in the Transvaal.

Early in December the Boers held a meeting to protest against this breach of faith. Nearly the whole of the farmers of the country were present, and the solemnity of a religious sanction was given to the gathering. They resolved that they never had been and never would be subjects of the Queen, and that the Republic should be restored. The fervid Puritanism of these Dutchmen comes out in all their doings. They sent their deputations to England with the blessing spoken over Joshua, and they broke up this December meeting singing the 124th Psalm. Sir Garnet Wolseley is thus face to face with a difficulty he did not bargain for, and which his soldierly methods do not suit. The new territory is in passive rebellion; and must either be held down by a British force at the cost of British taxpayers, or be restored to independence and freedom.

CHAPTER XX.

A YEAR OF LEGISLATIVE FAILURES.

No gloomier year has dawned on England since the time of the Irish famine than the year of promise, 1879. A bitter winter which had set in early had given way to softer airs at the close of the old year, but early in the new year the frost came back. The most prominent subject in the newspapers was the universal distress. From Cornwall to Northumberland there was not a manufacturing or mining district in the country that was not suffering. In Manchester it was noted that the privation rested more upon the lower middle classes, the clerks, shopmen, travellers and small tradesmen, than on the working classes; and everywhere stories were told of wealthy men who had sold their carriages, dismissed their servants, shut up their large houses and gone off to town or to a watering-place to economize as rich men do. Among the working classes the distress deepened as the year advanced. Piteous accounts were given of the bare houses in which they were only half sheltered from the cold and the sad shifts to which they were reduced to scrape together an insufficient meal. The Ministers were loth to recognize the state of the country. It seemed impossible to them that all the promises they

had kept before the people in the summer and the early autumn should have been so utterly disappointed. Not a word about the distress appeared in the Queen's Speech. Lord Ravensworth however, in moving the Address in the House of Lords, expressed his sympathy for "the thousands, I fear I must say the millions of my countrymen who are suffering hardship, privation and misery from the depression in the chief industries of the country."* Lord Granville expressed his regret that the Ministers should have omitted "to insert a single word of sympathy with the great distress which indubitably exists among the trading, the manufacturing, and the agricultural classes."† Lord Beaconsfield apologized for the omission by saying that "it is a questionable course to allude publicly to the distress of the country when it is not peculiar to the country itself, when you are not yourselves prepared with any remedial measures, and when if you express your real opinions you may give rise to hopes and miscalculations which afterwards may be disappointed and defeated."‡ Later in the preliminary Session Mr. J. G. Hubbard asked Mr. Cross whether he could correct or corroborate the report that "we are almost face to face with such a crisis of distress as this generation has never known," and Mr. Cross replied that the statement in the question "is a considerable exaggeration, and does not agree with the true facts of the case," and quoted despatches from the Mayors of Liverpool and Manchester, stating that there was

* Hansard, Vol. 243, col. 17.

† Id., col. 24.

‡ Id., col. 79.

considerable hardship but no need for Government aid. Mr. Mundella asked about Sheffield, and Mr. Anderson about Glasgow, but the Home Secretary had no information. Mr. Hanbury Tracey questioned Mr. Sclater Booth, who said there had been no "such severe distress as to require exceptional measures."* Sir M. Hicks-Beach, speaking at Gloucester on the 2nd of January, said, "It is true, I am sorry to say, that matters are not quite so bright as we could desire, trade is depressed, and there is in parts of the country a distress which we must regret, though a distress by no means of that exceptional character which in some quarters, I think for party purposes, it has been represented to be." Challenged for this statement he repeated it at Stroud a fortnight later, and specially singled out Mr. Rylands and Mr. Jacob Bright for the charge of very greatly exaggerating the suffering. Yet on the same day it was officially reported that 77,000 persons were receiving relief in Manchester and Salford, of whom 19,000 were relieved by the Guardians, and that twelve hundred men were at work in the stone-yard at Wolverhampton.

The reluctance of the Government to admit the existence of this Home distress was bitterly contrasted with the readiness it had shown to recognize that which was pressing on some Turkish insurgents in the Rhodope mountains. In the midst of the Afghan debate Sir Stafford Northcote had surprised both opponents and supporters by giving notice of a motion "for a grant in aid to the sufferers in the

* Hansard, Vol. 243, cols. 949, 950.

Rhodope district." Mr. Anderson at once gave notice that he would move an amendment declaring such a grant to be inexpedient "in face of the widespread distress prevailing in our own country and likely to increase during this winter." This was on a Friday evening. On the Monday when the House met again the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the motion for the grant would not be proceeded with. The reason of the withdrawal was explained by Sir William Harcourt who said that there had been a rebellion among the supporters of the Government. They had said—"Do not send us to our constituencies loaded with a claim for payment to the Turks." The proposal was probably intended to conciliate the Turks who were still smarting under the sense of their betrayal by the Government in which they had trusted. It was felt on all hands to be one of the most unwise proposals ever made to the House of Commons.

It is not improbable that the quick withdrawal of this foolish motion was due to the feeling that the Government was not increasing its popularity in the country. Two elections in December had excited much attention, and both had gone against the Government. At Maldon a Conservative seat was won for the Liberals by Mr. George Courtauld by a majority of 671 against 530. At Bristol there was a struggle which both sides had agreed to accept as decisive of the opinion of the country as to the policy of the Government. A Liberal seat had been vacated by the death of Mr. Kirkman Hodgson.

Sir Ivor Guest was the Conservative candidate, and Mr. Fry was brought forward by the Liberals. The result of the ballot on the 14th of December took both parties by surprise. Mr. Fry polled 9,342 votes, being 544 more than had placed Mr. Kirkman Hodgson at the top of the poll in 1874, while Sir Ivor Guest received only 7,795 votes, being 757 fewer than had been given to the highest Conservative candidate at that previous ballot. Four months earlier Mr. Malcolm had resigned his seat for Boston confidently hoping to win a victory for the Government in Argyllshire against Lord Colin Campbell, who however beat him by 1,462 against 1,107. A vacancy in North Norfolk had to be filled in January 1879, and here too the contest was regarded on both sides as indicating the attitude of the rural constituencies. There had been no ballot in 1874; but on the death of Mr. F. Walpole in 1876 Sir T. Fowell Buxton had come forward as the Liberal candidate, and had received 2,192 votes to 2,302 for the Conservative, Lieutenant-Colonel Duff. Sir T. F. Buxton now came forward again and Mr. Edward Birkbeck was the Conservative candidate. The ballot resulted in the increase of the Conservative vote to 2,742 and of the Liberal vote to 2,252. The Conservative majority of 110 was thus increased to 490, and the Government was consoled for the loss at Maldon and the rebuff at Bristol. After this defeat the Liberals did not contest Cambridgeshire nor South Warwickshire, and the Conservatives put up the Scotch Solicitor-General in

February, to fight for a Liberal seat in the Haddington Burghs, but were defeated by a majority three-and-thirty less than that by which a Liberal had been seated six months before.

When Parliament reassembled on the 13th of February the public mind had been distracted from all domestic affairs by the terrible tragedy in South Africa. Lord Beaconsfield, however, named the domestic subjects with which the Government proposed to deal. The Mutiny Bill was to be recast, and so much of it as could be made permanent was to be enacted in the shape of a Military Code. The Criminal Law was to be consolidated. Bankruptcy was to be dealt with at last. A Bill for amending the law as to the Summary Jurisdiction of Magistrates was again promised. The Railway Commission had to be continued, and the County Boards and the Valuation Bills would be discussed again. The Scotch Poor Laws and the Irish Grand Jury system were both to be the subjects of amending measures. To this outline Sir Stafford Northcote added in the Commons, that he should redeem last Session's pledge to pass a new Corrupt Practices Act; that "some measure with regard to Banks" would be brought in; that there would be legislation on the relations of Employers and Workmen, as well as a Bill dealing with the subject of Loans for Public Works. Some resolutions on Public Business would also be submitted to the House. In this way the two Ministers divided between them the announcements which have hitherto been made in the Royal

Speech at the opening of the Session. Three days later The O'Donoghue asked if it was finally settled that the Government would not deal with Irish University Education this Session, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, "Yes, Sir, the Government have decided not to deal with the question this Session." The Duke of Richmond announced in reply to Lord Granville, on the next day, that the Lord Chancellor would introduce a Bill dealing with County Courts; and that he would himself bring in a measure for amending the Medical Acts and one for the Conservancy of Rivers and "on the question of Floods generally."

Once more, therefore, the Government started with a large budget of good intentions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer tried to fortify himself beforehand against obstruction, by giving notice of a series of resolutions modifying the rules of the House. The first of these proposed the restoration of a rule adopted in 1872 and 1873, and partially readopted in 1876, which prevented any amendment from being made to the motion that the Speaker leave the Chair on going into Committee of Supply on Monday nights. The resolution of 1872 excluded from this rule the evenings on which the Army, Navy, or Civil Service Estimates were introduced, by allowing an amendment to be moved "relating to the division of Estimates proposed to be considered on that day." The Government wished to restore the rule without the limitation. The advantage would be that the Minister who came down to

explain the Estimates would not be baulked as he now is, and kept waiting for hours, perhaps for days, by a preliminary discussion, but would go on with his speech at once. The convenience of the Minister would, however, be purchased by the loss to private members of large opportunities for stating grievances or raising debate, and the House, after three nights' debate resolved on retaining the former limitation. This was the only change made. The other resolutions were dropped.

The chief Government measure of the Session was the Army Bill. This Bill cannot be better described than in the words of Sir William Harcourt in the debate on the second reading. "There were many parts of the Bill on which he was incapable of forming an opinion, but the great merit of it to his mind was that it was a consolidation of the Mutiny Act and of the Articles of War. The consent of the Crown to bring the Articles of War into the Mutiny Act was a great advantage. It had brought the whole thing under Parliamentary revision and control. There was still left to the Crown the power of making Articles of War in unforeseen cases, which was very just and proper."* The Bill was read a second time on the 7th of April, and got into Committee and advanced to the ninth clause on the 1st of May. Twenty more clauses were got through in the next week; and in three more evenings in the same month the 44th clause was reached. Then began great debates on flogging. Up to this point the Opposi-

* Hansard, Vol. 245, col. 479.

tion had helped the Government against some Irish members; but now both Government and Opposition hesitated. Mr. Chamberlain interposed with a speech against flogging which Sir Robert Peel said had "entirely upset the calculations of the Government and impressed every one who had listened to it."* Mr. Chamberlain had asked for a Schedule specifying the offences for which, on active service, a man would be liable to be flogged, and Colonel Stanley had to promise that such a Schedule should be produced. Then arose the question as to the number of lashes—the Government were supported by a large majority in preferring the word "lashes" to the word "stripes"—and Colonel Stanley consented to reduce them from fifty to twenty-five. Long debates then arose upon the kind of "cat" to be used, and a proposal to reject the old "cat-o'-nine-tails" was only defeated by a majority of 23, Mr. Justin McCarthy suggesting to the Government in the course of the debate that they should go to the country with the cry "Our old cat and our new Constitution." As the discussion went on the feeling against flogging grew. Colonel Stanley hesitated and seemed inclined to give way. Meanwhile all kinds of personal discussions arose, and a whole evening was wasted over a supposed threat of Mr. Parnell's. At length on the 17th of July, when the House had been in Committee on the Bill more than twenty times, Lord Hartington moved to abolish corporal punishment for military offences. The division gave a majority for the retention of flogging of 106—289 against 183. On the next day

* Hansard, Vol. 247, col. 53.

the Bill was read a third time, and was then hurried through the House of Lords in four days.

The Government had bitterly disappointed the Irish members by refusing to deal with University Education, contrary to the expectations which its negotiations with the Roman Catholic hierarchy had led them to cherish. The O'Connor Don succeeded in forcing them to reconsider their decision. He brought forward a Bill of his own, which, after some delays, he was able to explain to the House on the 15th of May. Mr. Forster would not pledge himself to The O'Connor Don's scheme, which would have endowed sectarian colleges all over Ireland, but he asked for full opportunity to discuss it. The Government showed little alacrity in giving the Bill a day. On the second reading, which came on on the 21st of May, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a hesitating speech saying that he wished to see the full proposal and hoping that the matter might wait till the Intermediate Education Act had had fuller trial. The question then stood over till the 25th of June, when the whole morning was spent in a long debate, in the course of which the Attorney-General for Ireland strongly opposed the Bill. It was after five o'clock when the Home Secretary rose and made a speech in which he objected to any scheme for the endowment of religious teaching, which he declared to be opposed to the whole spirit and tendency of modern legislation. He concluded by saying as he was preparing to sit down "the Government have come to the conclusion that it would be right at all events, to put in form

their views of what might be done on the question of Irish University Education, the Lord Chancellor will to-morrow ask leave in 'another place,' to introduce a measure on that subject."* The House stood still at this sudden surprise, the most sudden and the most surprising of the series, and Mr. Cross was questioned as to his meaning, when he repeated the precise words used before. The "other place" was consequently crowded on the next afternoon by peers, strangers, and members of the House of Commons. But here another surprise was in store. The Lord Chancellor merely gave notice that on the succeeding Monday he would call attention to University Education in Ireland, and ask leave to bring in a Bill. The Bill in fact was not ready. The resolution Mr. Cross announced was probably only come to during Wednesday's debate, on Thursday it was found to be difficult to carry out in a hurry, and therefore four more days for considering it were gained at a general inconvenience for which the Lord Chancellor apologized to the House in introducing the Bill.

The new scheme proved to be one for abolishing the Queen's University and setting up another new University in its place. The new University is an examining body; is open to all comers wherever they have been educated, and is to confer degrees in all Faculties except Theology. In the House of Commons an important clause was added, authorizing the Senate to prepare a scheme by which exhibitions, scholarships, fellowships, and other prizes, to be

* Hansard, Vol. 247, col. 664.

awarded to students for proficiency in secular subjects only, are to be established out of moneys to be provided by Parliament. Mr. Shaw met the second reading in the House of Commons by an amendment declaring that Ireland needed facilities for Collegiate Education as well as for the attainment of University Degrees, but was defeated by 257 to 90. This was on the 24th of July. On the 5th of August the morning sitting was taken up with a debate on going into Committee, but in the evening sitting of the same day and the Wednesday morning sitting of the next day the whole Bill was got through. On the succeeding Monday the Report was taken and the Bill read a third time and passed. The Lords next day accepted the Commons' amendments, and on the 15th the Bill received the Royal Assent. It had been determined on, brought in, discussed, passed and made law in a day or two more than seven weeks.

These were the two chief Government measures of the year. A few other Bills were passed but only one of them had much opposition to encounter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had a quarrel with Mr. Chamberlain which roused him to unwonted energy to pass a Bill Mr. Chamberlain opposed. He kept the House up all night on the 11th of August to force through the Public Works Loans Bill, which limited the privileges of municipal bodies in borrowing money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. It was six in the morning of the 12th of August when the Bill got through Committee, and the opportunity was taken to push on the Corrupt

Practices Bill, which had been lightened of all contentious matter and reduced to a mere perpetuation of the former Acts with two Election judges instead of one. It was seven o'clock in the morning of the 12th when this Bill was saved from the legislative wreck. The Government was equally persistent and consequently successful with a measure for handing over £1,300,000 from the Church Surplus to the Elementary Teachers of Ireland as a Pension Fund. The Banking Bill was cut down to a mere provision for allowing Banks to register themselves as "Limited." The persistence of the Irish members in demanding the repeal of the Irish Convention Act, which had been passed in the reign of George the Third to make all political meetings illegal in Ireland, was rewarded by a measure repealing it with certain reservations. The long-neglected pledge to appoint a Public Prosecutor was at last redeemed by an Act "for more effectually providing for Prosecutions in England" by empowering the Home Secretary to appoint "a Director of Public Prosecutions;" and a Summary Jurisdiction Bill was passed by general consent which has increased the powers and the discretion of magistrates. Some other small unopposed Government Bills, such as the reappointment of the Railway Commissioners, were passed. Private members made few legislative successes. Mr. Anderson, Sir Thomas Chambers and Sir James Clarke Lawrence passed an Act to put down the nuisance of suburban race meetings; and Earl De La Warr succeeded in prohibiting Dangerous Performances by children. Dr.

Cameron passed a Bill allowing Habitual Drunkards, with their previous consent, to be put under restraint.

The chief achievement in private members' legislation belongs to Mr. Alfred Marten, who—not without unostentatious Ministerial help—smuggled through a Bill which nobody recognized in the House of Commons and which was declared to be something else when Lord Granville challenged it in the House of Lords. It professed to be a Public Health Bill, it really was a Burials Bill. Mr. Osborne Morgan complained on the third reading that Mr. Marten had stolen a march upon his opponents by slipping it through committee in a moment when Mr. Morgan's back was turned. He had given them no time to put down any notice to oppose the third reading, so that it came on at an hour when opposed business could not be taken. Sir Wilfrid Lawson thought there was “nothing ecclesiastical in the Bill,” an assurance which Mr. Cross himself emphatically repeated, and added “it only enabled Local Authorities to take more powers in respect to sanitary matters.”* In the Lords, Lord Granville declared that it was “not an amendment of the Public Health Act—it is an alteration of the Burial Laws.” He divided the House against it, but Ministerial assurances prevailed and he was beaten by a majority of 51. In Committee Lord Kimberley opposed the Bill, and Lord Cranbrook said “he hoped the question of passing this Bill would not be made one between Churchmen and Dissenters, that no such attempt would be made to

* Hansard, Vol. 247, col. 288.

amplify a little measure.”* On another division the Bill was approved by a majority of 48. At the next stage Lord Aberdare moved amendments taken from the Government Bill of 1877. Lord Stanhope opposed “amendments to this small and unpretentious Bill;”† and Lord Cranbrook, in reply to Lord Granville’s declaration that “it would inflict on Dissenters an additional grievance,” said “there was complete misapprehension with respect to the Bill.”‡ So the measure passed, and when the Parliamentary recess was three days old the mask was thrown off. Mr. Sclater Booth issued a circular making an attempt to “amplify this little measure” into a vast change in the Burial Laws. He called the attention of Local Authorities to it, reminded them of the “important powers” it confers upon them, and of the “serious obligations” and “responsibilities” which the Legislature had by this Act imposed upon them. In this Circular he read into the Bill a whole bundle of ecclesiastical matters, making it out to be a measure for imposing on all Local Authorities the provision of new cemeteries in which Nonconformists may be buried, instead of giving them the right of sepulture in the old churchyards. The scheme has failed, but burial exclusiveness must have been driven to its last defence when it seeks to prolong its existence by practising a deceit on the two Houses of Parliament.

Very few Government measures reached maturity. The Lord Chancellor was once more early in the field with his Bankruptcy Bill, which passed the

* Hansard, Vol. 238, col. 5.

† Id., col. 438.

‡ Id., col. 440.

House of Lords before the end of March. The Attorney-General introduced it in the Commons on the 28th of March, and then put it aside till July. In July it was debated several times, the second reading was passed without a division, it was remorselessly cut down to ease its progress, the House was counted out in a discussion on going into Committee, and then the Bill was dropped. A measure of the Lord Chancellor's dealing with Irish Local Courts of Bankruptcy ran a similar course. It was passed by the Lords, was read a second time in the Commons, got into Committee, and was then withdrawn. The County Courts Bill of the Lord Chancellor went through all its stages in the Lords, but never passed any stages in the Commons. A Bill intended to remedy difficulties which have arisen in the carrying out of the Charitable Trusts Acts was read a second time by the Lords, but the Lord Chancellor's own legislative energy failed, and the difficulties remain. The Great Seal Bill was thought to be worth occupying the time of the Lord Chancellor and the Peers, who discussed and passed it; it was even read a second time in the Commons, and was then abandoned. The Lord Chancellor's Bill to amend the Debtor's Act went through the Lords in a similar way to a similar fate in the Commons. An important measure amending the Acts which established the Supreme Court of Judicature was passed through the Lords, was got into Committee in the Commons, and then perished. A Border Summons Bill was read a second time at the Lord

Chancellor's suggestion and then no more heard of. The Bill to consolidate the Municipal Corporations Acts was only laid on the table towards the end of the Session. So important did it seem to the Government to amend the Courts of Justice Building Act that the Lord Chancellor put a Bill for that purpose before the Lords, and Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson introduced one in the Commons, but neither was passed. The Lord President gave the Peers very useful occupation in elaborating and passing a Bill for the Conservancy of Rivers and the Prevention of Floods. The Bill was sent down to the House of Commons in May, but Mr. Selater Booth allowed all the time spent on it to be lost by letting it die of neglect. The Duke of Richmond also re-introduced his Medical Bill of the year before. Again the Peers passed it, and again it got to the Commons early in the Session. There it was read a second time, carefully examined and reported on by a Select Committee, and then abandoned. The Lord Steward was moved to amend the Metropolis Carriage Act. The House of Lords consented and passed the Bill, which disappeared when it got to the Commons.

Bills begun in the Lower House shared the same fate. Mr. Selater Booth produced his fourth Valuation Bill, which was read a second time on the last day of February. There were debates on going into Committee in April and May, and the Bill then went to sleep till the last day of July, when Mr. Selater Booth sacrificed it once more. His County Boards Bill was not so promptly introduced. It was the

County Government Bill of the previous Session with more than half its meaning gone. It cut down the duties of the County Board to the mere levying of a rate which the magistrates both made and spent, to the care of the local highways and to the charge of pauper lunatics. Mr. Selater Booth showed no affection for his offspring, neglected it all the Session, and let it perish in the dog-days. The Government Patents Bill was introduced by the Attorney-General in February, was kept on the Orders till the middle of July, and was then withdrawn. A Copyright Bill was formally ordered to be brought in, but nothing was ever heard of it afterwards. Mr. Cross and the Attorney-General got last year's measure dealing with Coroners again read a second time, and examined and reported on by a Select Committee, but they carried it no farther. The promised measure defining the Liability of Employers for Injuries to Workmen was explained by the Attorney-General in March, was kept before the House all the summer to paralyze the efforts of private members to legislate on the subject, and was abandoned in July. The Criminal Code Bill was got to a second reading and there stopped. A measure dealing with Chartered Banks in the Colonies, promoted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was introduced, debated and withdrawn. Two successive Scotch Poor Law Bills were introduced by the Lord Advocate, to come to nothing. The Irish Secretary produced the promised Irish Grand Jury Bill in May, but did nothing further in the matter. In

conjunction with the Irish Attorney-General he introduced a Bill to amend the Irish Dogs Regulation Act, which was pushed a little way and then left to its fate. The same officials carried a measure dealing with the Irish Hempen and Linen Manufactures through the second reading and then dropped it. The Lord Advocate and Mr. Secretary Cross brought in a Scotch Game Law Bill which was read a second time, passed through Committee, and then withdrawn. The Indian Marine Bill of the Under-Secretary for India went through the same stages to the same end. Finally, Mr. Selater Booth and Lord Sandon brought in a Bill dealing with Noxious Gases, but the debate on the second reading was adjourned, and they never cared to renew the discussion.

The history of English Parliaments presents no such record as this of legislative failure. The blame is put on the Irish obstructives, but the list of abandoned Bills shows at a glance that it rightly belongs to Ministers who have been getting in each other's way. The time wasted on one-half of these measures would have been more than sufficient for the completion of the other half. Not only was there no method in the introduction of Bills, but there was no scheme for their management after they were introduced. Every Minister seems to have acted in complete independence of all the rest. Bills were flung before Parliament without any thought of how they could be got through. There has been no order, no discipline, and no head. The Ministers,

so far as domestic legislation is concerned, have been a mere mob. They have run hither and thither in fussy activity, and prevented each other from doing anything. The Liberal surplus was not more uselessly squandered than the great Conservative majority. The finance of the nation has not been more utterly confused than its domestic business. Legislation has been a mere purposeless scramble, out of which a few small Acts have been plucked, and the House of Commons has been like a household in which the parents are busy with the affairs of their neighbours, the children are all at cross purposes with each other, and the servants rule.

The disappointment of the autumnal promises of peace, and the delay of the long prophesied prosperity had disastrous results for Sir Stafford Northcote's Finance. He had put off debts in 1878, trusting to good luck to give him the means of paying them, but they came back doubled in 1879. The Finance of the year was therefore again based on the policy of delay. In his Budget speech on the 3rd of April, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to begin with a confession that he had reckoned on an Expenditure of £81,020,000, and a Revenue, before making any additions to taxation, of £79,460,000. He had hoped the new taxes would raise the Revenue to £83,230,000, but the actual yield had fallen short of this sum by £114,000. There had been a falling off in the Customs, in the Excise, and in Stamps; but the last of these was due to a temporary cause, and the loss under that head in the bygone Financial

year was likely to be made up in the year then begun. The Expenditure had exceeded the original Estimate by £4,388,000, so that instead of the surplus on which he had reckoned to pay off the postponed debts he found himself face to face with a new deficiency. The Revenue had been £83,116,000, and the Expenditure £85,407,000, making a deficit of £2,291,000 to be added to that of the previous year. He proposed to deal with this deficit as he did with that—postpone it for the hope of better times. In this way he had paid debts in 1878 to the amount of £2,750,000 by promises to pay a twelvemonth hence. The bills were due, and instead of means to pay them there were these further debts; and so it became needful to put off £5,350,000 to the future. Having thus disposed of debts, the Estimate of Expenditure for the current year, apart from any provision for the war in South Africa, was £81,153,573. The Revenue was reckoned to yield £83,055,000. Here was a margin to the good of £1,900,000, and though the War Office and the Admiralty could not then give Estimates as to the cost of the Zulu War, the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought he might fairly assume that his surplus would “cover any calls likely to be made upon it in respect of that charge in the current year,” and possibly £600,000 out of the above £5,350,000. But this was in April. In August Sir Stafford Northcote came down to the House with some new figures. The Zulu War was spending £500,000 a month, and he wanted a Vote of Credit on its account of £3,000,000. There had

been a further addition of £64,000 to the ordinary Estimates; so that altogether the year's Expenditure was raised to £84,218,000. Instead of his surplus of £1,900,000 there was a deficiency for next April of £1,163,000, supposing that the £3,000,000 covers the cost of the Zulu War, that no extra charges come on the English Exchequer for the prolonged struggle in Afghanistan, and that the Revenue keeps up. But it is certain that the Revenue will not keep up. The Revenue Returns issued on the last night of 1879 showed that in the nine months of the financial year then completed, the Customs had fallen off £566,000, and the Excise £1,123,000. The Estimate was that in the whole twelve months there would be a decrease of £316,000 in the former, and of £130,000 in the latter. The month of January 1880 has shown no sign of recovering any portion of this loss. There has been an increase in Stamps and Income Tax, but not enough to compensate for the deficiency in the other items; and the financial prospect is as gloomy as any that this generation has seen.

The political motions of the year ran the usual course. A debate on the claims of Greece was raised by Mr. Cartwright in April, on a motion "that tranquillity in the East demands that satisfaction be given to the just claims of Greece, and no satisfaction can be considered adequate that does not ensure the execution of the recommendations embodied in Protocol 13 of the Berlin Congress." In the course of the debate thus raised the Chancellor of the

Exchequer pleaded that the negotiations were going on, and asked not to have a division. A division, however, took place in a thin House, and resulted in a majority of 16 against the motion. There was a more important discussion towards the end of July on a motion by Sir Charles Dilke, calling attention to the unfulfilled arrangements of the Treaty and asking the Government "to procure for Greece the rectification of frontier agreed upon by the Powers." The motion was seconded by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and was feebly resisted by the Government. Sir H. Drummond Wolff, who had just returned from Eastern Roumelia, gave a most striking account of the entire corruption and stagnation of the Turkish Government, to which his own side listened in dismayed silence. The Government promised to use its best efforts on behalf of Greece, and the debate was adjourned and not renewed. During the recess the Government has been fitfully putting pressure on the Turks. Its hope seems to be in Baker Pacha, who has been sent on some Mission to Asia Minor, apparently in the hope that his presence there will inspire the official Turks with resolutions of reform.

The Government laughed down Lord Bateman and Mr. MacIver, whose political economy is outside the pale of reasoning. They were in more difficulty with Mr. Chaplin, who at least had a case. The Agricultural Depression had become a political as well as a social fact. The Government delayed the recognition of it till the last moment, and then granted a Royal Commission to inquire into it. Mr.

Chaplin clearly hinted in his speech at the revival of Protection and some Conservative members have since avowed their desire to restore the duty on imported food. The Government gave no sanction to this view, but all its members have expressed the hope that the depression is temporary. Lord Hartington in speaking on Mr. Chaplin's motion, said that if his case was true, "if he can prove it before a Royal Commission, then in the first place the remedy must be looked for elsewhere than in the quarter which he has indicated, and if he can prove his case it is nothing more or less than this, that the land system of this country, under existing conditions, has broken down."* The conditions, he said, overlaid the system and were capable of being amended without destroying it. He wished that the law of entail and settlement should be inquired into as well as the law of distress and the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act. Lord Beaconsfield, in a speech at Aylesbury and again in his November oration at the Guildhall banquet, endeavoured to fix on Lord Hartington the statement that our land system had broken down absolutely, and raised the cry of revolution. The same cry was still more loudly raised when, in the course of his speeches in Scotland, Mr. Gladstone assailed the law of primogeniture and entail. It was raised again when, in his speech at Birmingham on the 24th of January, Mr. Bright suggested that an effort should be made to settle a large number of Irish peasants as farmers

* Hansard, Vol. 245, col. 1527.

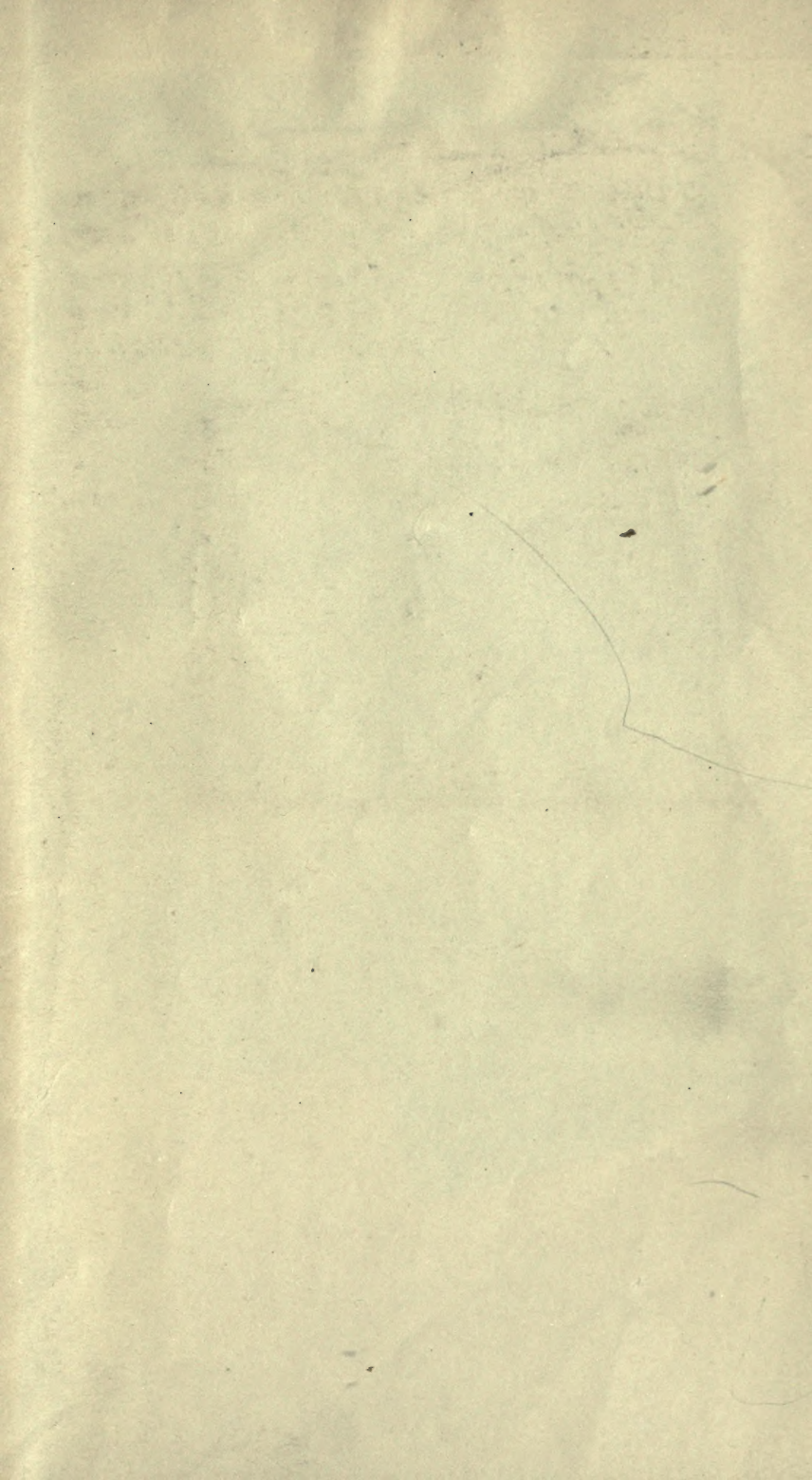
on their own land. Yet Mr. Bright's suggestion was only the carrying out on a larger scale of a principle which Parliament sanctioned during the late Session. Mr. Shaw Lefevre called attention to the failure of the Bright clauses of the Irish Land Act, and proposed a resolution declaring that "in view of the importance of a considerable addition to the number of owners of land in Ireland among the class of persons cultivating its soil, it is expedient that legislation should be adopted without further delay for increasing the facilities proposed with this object by the Irish Land Act 1870, and for securing to the tenants of land offered for sale the opportunity of purchase, consistently with the interest of the owners thereof." The Government opposed this resolution by putting up the Irish Secretary to speak against it; but afterwards the Chancellor of the Exchequer accepted it without a division. The political awakening of the farmers, the Irish agitation, and the declarations of both Liberals and Conservatives, have made the recasting of the land laws, and the general reform of rural taxation and administration, the foremost questions of the time.

The rapid progress of public opinion on some of these topics has of course been due to the teaching of adversity. It seems likely that reforms in the laws regulating the sale, the transmission, and the utilization of land, which in 1874 would have been regarded as revolutionary, may soon be accepted by common consent. Meanwhile the political education of the people in preparation for the coming election

proceeds rapidly and surely. The whole autumn and winter have been filled with the din of public debate. The Liberal and Conservative gatherings at Manchester and Leeds; the national welcome given by Scotland and even by the North of England to Mr. Gladstone, and the great meetings at Birmingham, have all shown the quickened interest taken by the nation in political questions. Two elections at the close of last year excited unequal interest, but both were significant. In the third week in December Mr. Thomas Lea was returned for County Donegal by a majority of 2,313, against 1,630 given for the Conservative candidate. In August 1876 the late Conservative member had polled 1,975 against Mr. Lea's 1,876; a Liberal minority of 99 had thus in three years been turned into a majority of 683. In Sheffield the election took place in the busiest week of the year. Mr. Roebuck had scarcely ever given a Liberal vote of late years, and he had become not only one of the most ardent supporters of the Government, but one of the bitterest critics and assailants of the Liberal leaders. In 1874 he had headed the poll with 14,193 votes, Mr. Mundella coming second with 12,858. On his death on the last day of November, both parties agreed in fixing on the election of a successor as a test of the feeling of the country. The election was held before the new register said to be favourable to the Liberals came into force. On both sides the struggle was fought out with Yorkshire tenacity and energy, and ended in the return of Mr. Waddy by 14,062 votes, to

13,584 for Mr. Wortley. The supporters of the Government profess great satisfaction with this result; its opponents are content. The intensity of this contest gives evidence, however, of the fierceness of the coming struggle, and may probably indicate its end. England under Lord Beaconsfield has been led back from prosperous to unprosperous days, from peace and plenty to privation and war; from assured self-government to personal rule. The effort to shake herself free may be a supreme one, but it will certainly result in restoring the country to honest and economical finance, to domestic legislation ruled by desire for the people's welfare, and to a foreign policy based on truth, humanity and justice.

END.



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